श्रीकुलशेखरालवार्विरचित-

मुकुन्दमाला

MUKUNDAMĀLĀ

of

Sri Kulaśekharālwār

Rendered into English Verses with Annotations

By

Jñāna Bhakti Bhūṣana

S. SATYAMURTHI IYENGAR

(Retd. officer, Indian Audit Dept.)

Published by

Sri Raghavendrashrama

56/10, 17th Cross, Malleswaram, Bangalore-55

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श्री विश्वेशतीर्थ स्वामीजी

श्री पेजावर अधोक्षज मठ
जगद्गुरु मध्वाचार्य संस्थान
उडुपि - 576101

अहो भगवतः श्रीकृष्णस्य सर्वजनाकर्षकं मोहकं व्यक्तित्वम्। न केवलं तपस्विनो मुनयः, भावजीविनः, कवयः, सहृदयाः, साधवः अपि तु मुग्ध गोपांगनाः, गोपालबालाः, गोपशुपक्षिणोपि श्रीकृष्ण-कल्याणगुणाकर्षिताः। आत्मानमेव व्यस्मरन् अधुना विदेशीयाः अपि श्रीकृष्णभक्तिरसायनपानमत्ताः परवशाः नृत्यंतः संदृश्यंते। श्रीमदानंद-तीर्थाः नीलमेघश्यामं श्रीकृष्णं नीलमहासागरतया अरूपयन्। नद्यः सागरमिव ज्ञानिभक्त समुदायः सवेगं श्रीकृष्णसमीपमुपधावतीति ते निरूपितवंतः। "आत्मज्ञनदीभिराप्यः कृष्णावतारो हरिरेव सागरः"। एवं सर्वजनाकर्षणभूमिं भगवंतं श्रीकृष्णं भाषामाधुर्येण भावमाधुर्येण च समं समर्पणभावेन सुंदरं समुपवर्णयन्ती इयं मुकुन्दमाला सत्यं कवि-कण्ठमाला। अस्याः सुमङ्गलं आंग्लानुवादं निरीक्ष्य नितरां वयं प्रमुदिताः। अनेन देशविदेशेषु कृष्णभक्तिरसधारा प्रवाहिता भवतु इत्याशास्महे। एतदनुवादकृतः सत्यमूर्ति अय्यंगार् महोदयान्, सभक्त्युत्साहं एतद्ग्रन्थप्रकाशनकृतः आध्यात्मिकग्रन्थप्रकाशनबद्ध-दीक्षान् डा० बि. एन्. वासुदेवराव् महोदयानपि भगवान् श्रीकृष्णः समनुगृह्णातु इति प्रार्थयामि।

उडुपि
4-11-1987

श्री विश्वेशतीर्थ स्वामीजी

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BENEDICTION

Bewitching indeed the personality of Sri Krishna which lures away everything. Not only the Sages, Ascetics, Poets, Sadhus and Sants but also the innocent Gopikas, Gopabalas, cows, beasts, birds have been attracted towards Sri Krishna. Of late even foreigners have been entranced by the pleasant and amusing personality of Sri Krishna and we have seen them singing and dancing in ecstacy, becoming his devotees. Sri Madhvacharya has compared Sri Krishna of dark blue complexion to the dark blue Ocean. Devotees and men of wisdom rush towards Him like the rivers which descend down towards the Ocean :

"आत्मज्ञ नदीभिराप्यः कृष्णावतारो हरिरेव सागरः"

We are very much delighted to see the English translation of Mukundamāla which depicts Sri Krishna in the most beautiful manner, with submission along with its sweet language and sentiments. We wish that it would facilitate men all over the world to reach the beatitude of Bhakthi towards Sri Krishna and we sincerely pray Sri Krishna to bless Sri Satyamurthy Iyengar who has rendered it to English beautifully and Dr. B. N. Vasudeva Rao who is avowed to publish spiritual books, for having published this with great zest and devotion.

Udupi
4-11-1987

H. H. Sri Viswesha Thirtha Swamiji
Sri Pejawara Adhokshaja Mutt,
Jagadguru Madhvacharya Samsthana

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समर्पणम्

श्रीराघवेन्द्रगुर्वन्तर्गत
श्रीमध्वेशगुर्वन्तर्यामि उडुपि श्रीकृष्णस्य
चरणकमलयोः

डा० बी. एन्. वासुदेवराव्
श्रीराघवेन्द्राश्रमस्य संस्थापकाध्यक्षः

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FOREWORD

Sri Satyamurthy Iyengar of Gwalior, ripe in age and devotion to the Lord of the Universe and giver of Mokṣa (*Mukunda*) has conferred a great benefaction on countless devotees of the Lord by placing before them a beautiful edition of Saint Kulaśekhara Ālwar's *Mukundamālā*, a Garland of Verses born of spontaneous ecstacy. The highest characteristic of true devotees of the Lord as described in the Gita is that they share their devotion with like-minded people: *Bodhayantah parasparam*. The present edition of the *Mukundamālā* is conceived in this spirit. The publication has been financed by Sri Raghavendra Ashrama, Bangalore, of which Dr. B. N. Vasudeva Rao, the Founder-President, is the moving spirit.

The edition provides a complete text in Devanagari, separately at the beginning. Each verse is then given a metrical translation in English along with a transliteration of the text, with suitable annotations of the words and phrases. A caption at the beginning of each translated verse gives the gist of it.

This edition has only 40 verses, of which the opening one is probably not from the royal author himself as it *pays homage* to him by name, and rank. The Preface mentions another text of 46 verses. It deserves to be noted that as far back as 1933, Prof. K. Rama Pisharoti, Head of the Dept. of Sanskrit, Annamalai University, had brought out an edition of the *Mukundamālā*, based on Kerala Mss. with only 31 verses. This text has

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two celebrated verses "Ārtā viṣaṇṇā (14) and "Ye mānavāḥ" (25) which are not found in Sri Iyengar's edition. These two verses, curiously enough, are also found in Sri Madhvacarya's Anthology of Verses called *Krishnamrtamahārṇava* (as verses 66 and 52 of his work). This may give a clue to the date of the author of the *Mukundamālā* around the 12th or early 13th century as a later descendant of the Alwar of the royal family of Travancore. As the Lord of Anantapura is also a Śeṣasāyī the opening verse referring to the Rangayātrā daily in the city may also be a reference to the city of Anantapura. It is customary for the Maharajas of Trivandrum to visit the temple of Anantapadmanabha daily.

Coimbatore
25-10-1987

(Dr.) B. N. K. SHARMA
Rtd. Prof. of Sanskrit, Ruparel College, Bombay-16

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ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Jñāna Bhakti Bhūsaṇa Sri S. Satyamurthi Iyengar of Gwalior, who has dedicated his life to the study and the writings of Vaisnavite Literature, was born in 1907 and was brought up in Srirangam, the premier Vaisnavite pilgrim centre. The religious and the traditional fervour of the pilgrim centre moulded his mental make-up from childhood itself. After graduating from the Madras University in 1925, he joined the Indian Audit and Accounts Department and retired in 1962 therefrom as an officer with a distinguished record of service. His official duties in the department did not become an obstacle to his continuing the studies. He had the good fortune of studying the Rahasya Granthas in the traditional way under the late Nyāya Vedānta Vidwān, Sri Ubhaya Vedānta Vidwan Karappangadu Venkatacharya Swami, a great authority on Visistadvaita school of philosophy. He also underwent an intensive course of instructions and training for Seven years in "Bhagavad Vishayam" at the feet of Ubhaya Vedanta Vidwan Sadhu Ramanuja Acharya Swami, who later became the Periya Jeer of Tirumala-Tirupathi Devasthanam. Further, he had the good fortune of coming into close contact with the famous scholar Prativadibhayankara Sri Annangara Acharya of Kanchipuram.

With such a traditional background and learning of the original scriptures, Sri Iyengar has been able to disseminate his thoughts in English through many of his publications. He has contributed nearly 150 essays on various topics of Vedantic tenets, to a number of scholarly journals both in India and abroad. As regards his publications, which are mostly translations with glossaries, his translation of 'Tiruvāymoli' into English with glossary in four volumes stands out pre-eminent While reviewing his books in the columns of *The Hindu*, the learned reviewer pays glorious encomiums and says that the venture stands in comparison to the translations of Vedic, Upanisadic and Brahma Sutra texts into English by western Indological savants.

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He was conferred the title *Jñāna Bhakti Bhūṣaṇa* by Sri Annangaracharya Swami in 1968 in the temple of Sri Perambudur, when he sang his alphabetical compilation "Amudam Amudam" culled out from Rāmānuja Nūttrandādi.

He has also talked over the AIR several times on the Vedantic concepts.

As regards the present work, **Mukunda Mala,** Sri Iyengar has done the job excellently well. The verses are translated into English in verse form. The translation is happy and eminently readable. Every verse is appended with a short glossary which gives us a fine and thorough interpretation of the same, and which stands testimony to the scholarship of the author.

The Publishers shall feel amply rewarded if the readers are induced to a more serious study of the original scriptures, through this.

B. N. VASUDEVA RAO
President
Sri Raghavendra Ashrama
56/10, 17th Cross, Malleswaram

Bangalore-55
5th July 1987

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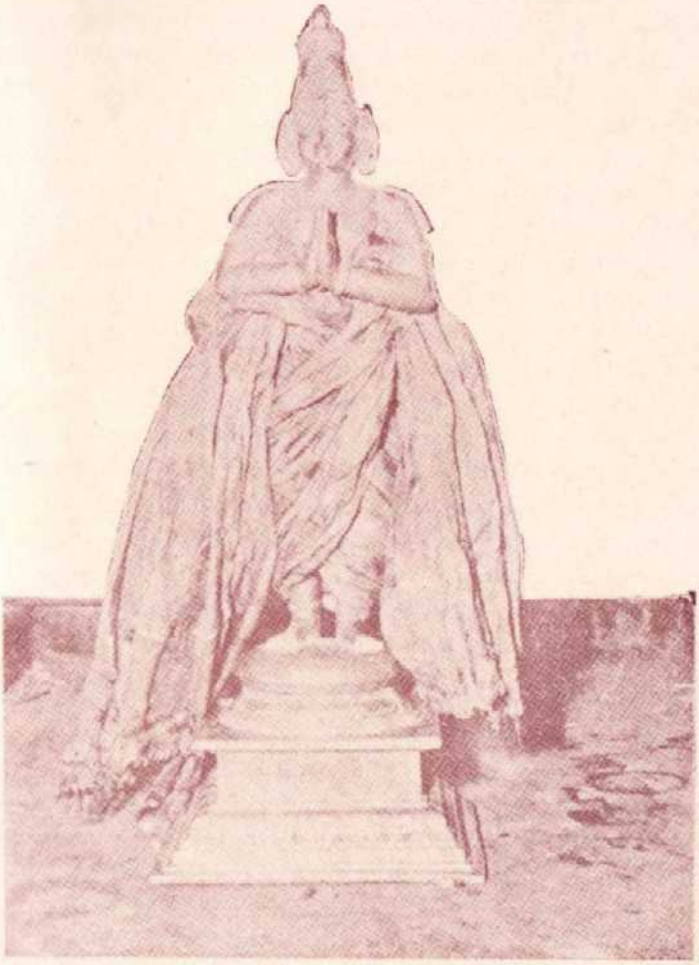

KULAŚEKHARA ĀLWĀR
Icon at his birth place Kolli

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

'Mukunda Mālā' is a hymnal garland, wreathed with the names bespeaking the great glory of Mukunda (Lord Viṣṇu), the great Redeemer, the sole granter of Mokṣa (cutting out, in toto, the material shackles of mundane moorings of the devout, taking refuge in Him), instead of mere flowers, as such. Set in an exquisite frame of forty* scintillating slokas, these laudatory hymns are saturated with devotion (Krishna bhakti) of a very high order. Their recital is, therefore, bound to transport anyone, including those not theistically minded, to the region of ecstasy, a highly rewarding experience. There is, however, a controversy regarding the authorship of this hymnal, whether it is the work of the ancient Chera King, canonised as Kulaśekhara Ālvār whose 105 songs under the caption, 'Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi' are incorporated in the Compendium, collectively known as 'Divya Prabandham', or of a remote scion of that 'Raja-Yogi'. This has been appropriately discussed, at some length, in the notes below the concluding sloka (40) which throws some light on the author, rather too meagre to arrive at a definite conclusion. Either way, it does not detract from the compelling claims of this soul-stirring hymnal for a distinguished place in our stotra-literature.

The first edition, compiled by me way back in the year 1973, rather hurriedly, in response to a telegraphic request from a deeply religious friend of mine in Kāñchi, was published early in the year 1974 by Sri Vembu Iyer, Śāśvata Dharma Śāsanam, Kadayanalloor, deep down in the South. I was painfully conscious of the numerous shortcomings in that edition, the saving grace being, however, the rare excellence of the translation (English verses), the outcome of the underlying inspiration. The booklet did not include the Sanskrit text of the slokas and even the transliteration thereof in English was not in accordance with the recognised international code. Adequate justice was not, rather could not be done in the much-too-brief

*There are as many as 46 slokas in some editions. But, in a comparatively larger number of editions, including the anicent palm-leaf scripts, only these forty slokas are found.

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time then allotted to me by the sponsors, by way of annotation and explanatory notes, which a hymnal of such a high order richly deserves. As a habitual reciter of these charming slokas every morning before the household Deity, the desire to supply these omissions has been lingering in my mind, all along. And yet, it has taken me more than a decade to work on this, due to my heavy pre-occupation in bringing out several books, big and small, some of which, including my marathon translation in English, of Saint Nammalvar's 'Tiruvaymoli', have gone into global circulation. The current edition, which gives the prose order of each sloka and the word for word (or phrases) meaning besides supplying the aforesaid omissions, does, I venture to hope, fulfil my long-cherished desire to make good the earlier omissions. I shall feel amply requited for my labours if these rare gems move round as large an area as possible, kindling in the minds of the readers cum chanters the lambent light of devotion, the certain impact of this great hymnal in its present form.

I am very grateful to :

Sri Raghavendrashrama, Bangalore for wholly financing this publication and to Sri B. N. Vasudeva Rao, Advocate in particular, for the keen interest with which he piloted this work and his unstinted, spontaneous help in seeing it through ;

Professor B. R. Seshadri Iyengar, Principal, M.E.S. College, Bangalore for his concerted efforts in bringing out this publication besides sparing his precious time for proof-reading, as well ;

Professor S. Ramachandra Shastry, Principal, M.L.A. First Grade College, Bangalore, for the onerous task of proof-reading, and the Proprietor and Staff of Prabha Printing House, Bangalore-4, for the neat printing and excellent get-up, betokening their high sense of dedication.

I am, however, primarily indebted to Sri B. S. S. Iyengar of Kappa Electricals Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore-10 for the large-hearted initiative taken by him to explore the possible avenues to get the glossary of this scintillating hymnal printed and published in the manner it has been done.

S. Satyamurthi Iyengar

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N.B. There are four types of address in these Slokas, namely,

(i) Address to the Lord (under various names)— (Slokas 1 to 7, 14, 15, 19 to 21, 27, 28, 32 to 34 and 39).

(ii) Address to self (Slokas 10 to 13, 16, 23, 24, 30 and 31)

(iii) Address to the fellow-beings around. (Slokas 17 and 18)

(iv) Warning to Cupid, the amorous angel who incites sexual romance. (Sloka 29)

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In the scheme of transliteration adopted here a, e, i and g always represent अ, ए, इ and ग respectively and never ए, इ, ऐ and ज or other values which they have in English; t and d are always used for त् and द् only. The letter c alone represents च्. Since the natural function of h will be to aspirate a consonant (e.g. kh, ch, ṭh, th, ph, gh, jh, ḍh, dh, bh), it would be an anomaly for a scientific scheme to use it in combinations like ch and sh for giving च् and ष् values; hence ch here is छ् and s h स् ह्. The vowel ऋ is represented by ṛ because ri, legitimate for रि only, is out of place, and the singular ṛi is an altogether objectionable distortion. The tilde over n represents ञ्, ñ. Accent mark over s gives श्, ś; dots above m and n give *anusvāra* ( ), ṁ and ङ्, ṅ, respectively. Dots below h, and r give *visarga* (:), ḥ and, ऋ ṛ respectively. Dots below s, n, t and d give their corresponding cerebrals ष्, ण्, ट् and ड्, ṣ, ṇ, ṭ, and ḍ; and macrons over a, i, u and r give आ, ई, ऊ, ॠ ā, ī, ū, $\bar{r}$ respectively. Macrons are not used to lengthen the quantity of e and o, because they always have the long quantity in Sanskrit. The scheme in full is as follows:

अ a, आ ā, इ i, ई ī, उ u, ऊ ū, ऋ ṛ, ॠ $\bar{r}$, ए e, ओ o, ऐ ai, औ au, ं ṁ, ः ḥ, क् k, ख् kh, ग् g, घ् gh, ङ् ṅ, च् c, छ् ch ज् j, झ् jh, ञ् ñ, ट् ṭ, ठ् ṭh, ड् ḍ, ढ् ḍh, ण् ṇ, त् t, थ् th, द् d, ध् dh, न् n, प् p, फ् ph, ब् b, भ् bh, म् m, य् y, र् r, ल् l, व् v, श् ś, ष् ṣ, स् s, ह् h.

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S. SATHYAMURTHY IYENGAR
Translator

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॥ मुकुन्दमाला ॥

घुष्यते यस्य नगरे रङ्गयात्रा दिने दिने ।
तमहं शिरसा वन्दे राजानं कुलशेखरम् ॥

श्रीवल्लभेति वरदेति दयापरेति
भक्तप्रियेति भवलुण्ठनकोविदेति ।
नाथेति नागशयनेति जगन्निवासे-
त्यालापनं प्रतिपदं कुरु मे मुकुन्द ! ॥ १ ॥

जयतु जयतु देवो देवकीनन्दनोयं
जयतु जयतु कृष्णो वृष्णिवंशप्रदीपः ।
जयतु जयतु मेघश्यामलः कोमलाङ्गो
जयतु जयतु पृथ्वीभारनाशो मुकुन्दः ॥ २ ॥

मुकुन्द मूर्ध्ना प्रणिपत्य याचे
भवन्तमेकान्तमियन्तमर्थम् ।
अविस्मृतिस्त्वच्चरणारविन्दे
भवे भवे मेऽस्तु भवत्प्रसादात् ॥ ३ ॥

नाहं वन्दे तव चरणयोर्द्वन्द्वमद्वन्द्वहेतोः
कुम्भीपाकं गुरुमपि हरे नारकं नापनेतुम् ।
रम्या रामा मृदुतनुलता नन्दने नापि रन्तुं
भावे भावे हृदयभवने भावयेयं भवन्तम् ॥ ४ ॥

नास्था धर्मे न वसुनिचये नैव कामोपभोगे
यद्यद् भव्यं भवतु भगवन् पूर्वकर्मानुरूपम् ।
एतत् प्रार्थ्यं मम बहुमतं जन्मजन्मान्तरेऽपि
त्वत्पादाम्भोरुहयुगगता निश्चला भक्तिरस्तु ॥ ५ ॥

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दिवि वा भुवि वा ममास्तु वासो
नरके वा नरकान्तक ! प्रकामम् ।
अवधीरित-शारदारविन्दौ
चरणौ ते मरणेऽपि चिन्तयामि ॥ ६ ॥

कृष्ण त्वदीय पदपङ्कज पञ्जरान्तम्
अद्यैव मे विशतु मानस राजहंसः ।
प्राणप्रयाणसमये कफवातपित्तैः
कण्ठावरोधन-विधौ स्मरणं कुतस्ते ॥ ७ ॥

चिन्तयामि हरिमेव सन्ततं
मन्दमन्द हसिताननाम्बुजम् ।
नन्दगोप तनयं परात्परं
नारदादि मुनिवृन्द वन्दितम् ॥ ८ ॥

करचरणसरोजे कान्तिमन्नेत्रमीने
श्रममुषि भुजवीचिव्याकुलेऽगाधमार्गे ।
हरिसरसि विगाह्यापीय तेजोजलौघं
भवमरुपरिखिन्नः खेदमद्य त्यजामि ॥ ९ ॥

सरसिजनयने सशङ्खचक्रे
मुरभिदि मा विरमस्व चित्त ! रन्तुम् ।
सुखतरमपरं न जातु जाने
हरिचरण स्मरणामृतेन तुल्यम् ॥ १० ॥

माभीर्मन्दमनो विचिन्त्य बहुधा यामीश्चिरं यातनाः
नामी नः प्रभवन्ति पापरिपवः स्वामी ननु श्रीधरः ।
आलस्यं व्यपनीय भक्तिसुलभं ध्यायस्व नारायणं
लोकस्य व्यसनापनोदनकरो दासस्य किं न क्षमः ॥११॥

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भवजलधिगतानां द्वन्द्ववाताहतानां
सुतदुहितृकळत्र त्राणभारार्दितानाम् ।
विषमविषयतोये मज्जतामप्लवानां
भवतु शरणमेको विष्णुपोतो नराणाम् ॥ १२ ॥

भवजलधिं अगाधं दुस्तरं निस्तरेयं
कथमहमिति चेतो मास्मगाः कातरत्वम् ।
सरसिजदृशि देवे तावकी भक्तिरेका
नरकभिदि निषण्णा तारयिष्यत्यवश्यम् ॥ १३ ॥

तृष्णातोये मदनपवनोद्धूतमोहोर्मिमाले
दारावर्ते तनयसहजग्राहसंघाकुले च ।
संसाराख्ये महति जलधौ मज्जतां नस्त्रिधामन्
पादाम्भोजे वरद भवतो भक्तिनावं प्रयच्छ ॥ १४ ॥

माद्राक्षं क्षीणपुण्यान् क्षणमपि भवतो भक्तिहीनान् पदाब्जे
माश्रौषं श्राव्यबन्धं तव चरितमपास्याऽन्यदाख्यानजातम् ।
मास्मार्षं माधव त्वामपि भुवनपते चेतसाऽपह्नुवानान्
माभूवं त्वत्सपर्या व्यतिकर रहितो जन्मजन्मान्तरेऽपि ॥१५॥

जिह्वे कीर्तय केशवं मुररिपुं चेतो भज श्रीधरं
पाणिद्वन्द्व समर्चयाच्युत कथाः श्रोत्रद्वय त्वं शृणु ।
कृष्णं लोकय लोचनद्वय हरेर्गच्छांघ्रियुग्मालयं
जिघ्र घ्राण मुकुन्दपादतुलसीं मूर्धन् नमाधोक्षजम् ॥१६॥

हे लोकाश्शृणुत प्रसूतिमरणव्याधेश्चिकित्सामिमां
योगज्ञास्समुदाहरन्ति मुनयो यां याज्ञवल्क्यादयः ।
अन्तर्ज्योतिरमेयमेकममृतं कृष्णाख्यमापीयतां
तत्पीतं परमौषधं वितनुते निर्वाणमात्यन्तिकम् ॥ १७ ॥

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हे मर्त्याः परमं हितं शृणुत वो वक्ष्यामि संक्षेपतः
संसारार्णवमापदूर्मिबहुलं सम्यक् प्रविश्य स्थिताः ।
नानाज्ञानमपास्य चेतसि नमो नारायणायेत्यमुं
मन्त्रं सप्रणवं प्रणामसहितं प्रावर्तयध्वं मुहुः ॥ १८ ॥

पृथ्वी रेणुरणुः पयांसि कणिकाः फल्गुस्फुलिङ्गोऽनलः
तेजो निःश्वसनं मरुत् तनुतरं रन्ध्रं सुसूक्ष्मं नभः ।
क्षुद्रा रुद्रपितामहप्रभृतयः कीटास्समस्तास्सुराः
दृष्टे यत्र स तावको विजयते भूमावधूतावधिः ॥ १९ ॥

बद्धेनाञ्जलिना नतेन शिरसा गात्रैस्सरोमोद्गमैः
कण्ठेन स्वरगद्गदेन नयने नोद्गीर्ण बाष्पाम्बुना ।
नित्यं त्वच्चरणारविन्दयुगलध्यानामृतास्वादिनां
अस्माकं सरसीरुहाक्ष सततं संपद्यतां जीवितम् ॥ २० ॥

हे गोपालक हे कृपाजलनिधे हे सिन्धुकन्यापते
हे कंसान्तक हे गजेन्द्र करुणापारीण हे माधव ।
हे रामानुज हे जगत्त्रयगुरो हे पुण्डरीकाक्ष मां
हे गोपीजननाथ पालय परं जानामि न त्वां विना ॥ २१ ॥

भक्तापायभुजङ्गगारुडमणिः त्रैलोक्यरक्षामणिः
गोपीलोचनचातकाम्बुदमणिः सौन्दर्यमुद्रामणिः ।
यः कान्तामणिरुक्मिणीघनकुचद्वन्द्वैकभूषामणिः
श्रेयो देवशिखामणिर्दिशतु नो गोपालचूडामणिः ॥ २२ ॥

शत्रुच्छेदैकमन्त्रं सकलमुपनिषद्वाक्यसंपूज्यमन्त्रं
संसारोत्तारमन्त्रं समुपचिततमस्सङ्घनिर्याणमन्त्रम् ।
सर्वैश्वर्यैकमन्त्रं व्यसनभुजग सन्दष्ट सन्त्राणमन्त्रं
जिह्वे श्रीकृष्णमन्त्रं जपजप सततं जन्मसाफल्यमन्त्रम् ॥ २३ ॥

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व्यामोहप्रशमौषधं मुनिमनोवृत्तिप्रवृत्त्यौषधं
दैत्येन्द्रार्त्तिकरौषधं त्रिजगतां सञ्जीवनैकौषधम् ।
भक्तात्यन्तहितौषधं भवभयप्रध्वंसनैकौषधं
श्रेयः प्राप्तिकरौषधं पिब मनश्श्रीकृष्णदिव्यौषधम् ॥ २४ ॥

आम्नायाभ्यसनान्यरण्यरुदितं देवव्रतान्यन्वहं
मेदश्छेदफलानि पूर्तविधयः सर्वेहुतं भस्मनि ।
तीर्थानामवगाहनानि च गजस्नानं विना यत्पद-
द्वन्द्वाम्भोरुहसंस्मृती विजयते देवस्य नारायणः ॥ २५ ॥

श्रीमन्नाम प्रोच्य नारायणाख्यं
के न प्रापुर्वाञ्छितं पापिनोऽपि ।
हा नः पूर्वं वाक्प्रवृत्ता न तस्मिन्
तेन प्राप्तं गर्भवासादिदुःखम् ॥ २६ ॥

मज्जन्मनः फलमिदं मधुकैटभारे
मत्प्रार्थनीयमदनुग्रह एष एव ।
त्वद्भृत्यभृत्यपरिचारक भृत्यभृत्य
भृत्यस्य भृत्य इति मां स्मर लोकनाथ ॥ २७ ॥

नाथे नः पुरुषोत्तमे त्रिजगतामेकाधिपे चेतसा
सेव्ये स्वस्य पदस्य दातरि सुरे नारायणे तिष्ठति ।
यं कञ्चित्पुरुषाधमं कतिपयग्रामेशमल्पार्थदं
सेवायै मृगयामहे नरमहो मूका वराका वयम् ॥ २८ ॥

मदन परिहर स्थितिं मदीये
मनसि मुकुन्दपदारविन्दधाम्नि ।
हरनयन कृशानुना कृशोसि
स्मरसि न चक्रपराक्रमं मुरारेः ॥ २९ ॥

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तत्त्वं ब्रुवाणानि परं परस्मात्
मधु क्षरन्तीव सतां फलानि ।
प्रावर्त्तय प्राञ्जलिरस्मि जिह्वे
नामानि नारायण गोचराणि ॥ ३० ॥

इदं शरीरं परिणामपेशलं पतत्यवश्यं श्लथसन्धिजर्जरम् ।
किमौषधैः क्लिश्यसि मूढ दुर्मते निरामयं कृष्णरसायनं पिब ॥ ३१ ॥

दारा वाराकारवरसुता ते तनूजो विरिञ्चः
स्तोता वेदस्तव सुरगणो भृत्यवर्गः प्रसादः ।
मुक्तिर्माया जगदविकलं तावकी देवकी ते
माता मित्रं बलरिपुसुतस्त्वय्यतोऽन्यन्न जाने ॥ ३२ ॥

कृष्णो रक्षतु नो जगत्त्रयगुरुः कृष्णं नमस्याम्यहं
कृष्णेनामरशत्रवो विनिहताः कृष्णाय तुभ्यं नमः ।
कृष्णादेव समुत्थितं जगदिदं कृष्णस्य दासोऽस्म्यहं
कृष्णे तिष्ठति सर्वमेतदखिलं हे कृष्ण रक्षस्व माम् ॥ ३३ ॥

तत्त्वं प्रसीद भगवन् कुरु मय्यनाथे
विष्णो कृपां परमकारुणिकः किल त्वम् ।
संसारसागरनिमग्नमनन्त दीनं
उद्धर्तुमर्हसि हरे पुरुषोत्तमोऽसि ॥ ३४ ॥

नमामि नारायण पादपङ्कजं
करोमि नारायण पूजनं सदा ।
वदामि नारायण नाम निर्मलं
स्मरामि नारायण तत्त्वमव्ययम् ॥ ३५ ॥

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श्रीनाथ नारायण वासुदेव
श्रीकृष्ण भक्तप्रिय चक्रपाणे ।
श्रीपद्मनाभाच्युत कैटभारे
श्रीराम पद्माक्ष हरे मुरारे ॥ ३६ ॥

अनन्त वैकुण्ठ मुकुन्द कृष्ण
गोविन्द दामोदर माधवेति ।
वक्तुं समर्थोऽपि न वक्ति कश्चित्
अहो जनानां व्यसनाभिमुख्यम् ॥ ३७ ॥

ध्यायन्ति ये विष्णुमनन्तमव्ययं
हृत्पद्ममध्ये सततं व्यवस्थितम् ।
समाहितानां सततामयप्रदं
ते यान्ति सिद्धिं परमाञ्च वैष्णवीम् ॥ ३८ ॥

क्षीरसागर तरङ्गशीकरा-
सारतारकित चारुमूर्त्तये ।
भोगिभोग शयनीयशायिने
माधवाय मधुविद्विषे नमः ॥ ३९ ॥

यस्य प्रियौ श्रुतिधरौ कविलोकवीरौ
मित्रौ द्विजन्मवरपद्म शरावभूताम् ।
तेनाम्बुजाक्ष चरणाम्बुज षट्पदेन
राज्ञा कृता कृतिरियं कुलशेखरेण ॥ ४० ॥

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ओं

श्रीकृष्ण परब्रह्मणे नमः

MUKUNDAMALA

Invocation

घुष्यते यस्य नगरे रङ्गयात्रा दिने दिने ।
तमहं शिरसा वन्दे राजानं कुलशेखरम् ॥

Ghuṣyate yasya nagare Raṅgayātrā dine dine
Tamahaṁ śirasā vande Rājāṇaṁ Kulaśekharam

Salutation to king Kulaśekhara in whose township clarion call was issued to the subjects, day after day, to go on a pilgrimage to holy Śrīraṅgam, the premier pilgrim centre where Lord Raṅganātha is enshrined.

Yasya nagare dine dine Raṅgayātrā ghuṣyate taṁ kulaśekharaṁ rājānaṁ ahaṁ śirasā vande.

yasya nagare—in whose township
dine dine—day by day
Raṅgayātrā ghuṣyate—pilgrimage to Śrīraṅgam is proclaimed lustily
taṁ kulaśekharaṁ rājānaṁ—unto that king Kulaśekhara
ahaṁ śirasā vande—I bow my head, in salutation.

King Kulaśekhara sat on the earthly throne only at the appropriate timings but the Lord sat enthroned in the king's heart, all the time. The earthly crown was no crown at all for him. What really crowned him were the Lord's pair of lotus feet, as proclaimed by him in 'Perumāḷ Tirumoḷi'. Kulaśekhara's ardour for worshipping Lord Raṅganātha in Śrīraṅgam gathered momentum, day by day, till at last he left his kingdom for good and took up his residence in that holy centre. In 10–2 of Daśādhyāyi of '*Śrīraṅga māhātmyam*', it has been stated that Śaṅkara Bhagavān told Devarishi Nārada, as follows:

" O, Nārada! pilgrimage to holy Śrīraṅgam, nay, the very desire to visit the pilgrim centre will lift ashore anyone, sunk

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deep in this mire of saṁsāra. That being the case, what to say about one's stay there, all the time!"

The very inclination to recite the Lord's holy names stems from His grace alone.

श्रीवल्लभेति वरदेति दयापरेति
भक्तप्रियेति भवलुण्ठनकोविदेति ।
नाथेति नागशयनेति जगन्निवासे-
त्यालापनं प्रतिपदं कुरु मे मुकुन्द ! ॥ १ ॥

Śrīvallabheti varadeti dayāpareti
Bhaktapriyeti bhavaluṇṭhana kovideti
Nātheti Nāgaśayaneti jagannivāse-
tyālāpanaṁ pratipadaṁ kuru me Mukunda !

O, Mukunda! make me your glory great oft recount,
As Lakṣmī's consort dear, as the bestower bounteous,
As the all-merciful, as the great friend of the devout,
As the deft destroyer of earthly bondage, as my sole support,
As the one lying on the serpent couch in sweet repose,
As the all-pervading Lord of the universe (and so on).

Me Mukunda! Śrīvallabha-iti, Varada-iti, dayāpara-iti, bhaktapriya-iti, bhava-luṇṭhana kovida-iti, Nātha-iti, Nāgaśayana-iti, jagannivāsa-iti, pratipadaṁ, ālāpanaṁ mām kuru.

Me Mukunda!—My (Lord) Mukunda!

Śrīvallabha-iti—as the dear consort of Śrī (Lakṣmi)

Varada-iti—as the bestower of bounty

dayāpara-iti—as the All-merciful (ever ready to condole our truck-loads of vices and forgive us)

Bhaktapriyeti—as the friend of the devout (dear unto them beyond words)

bhavaluṇṭhana, kovida-iti—as the deft (cum mighty) destroyer of earthly bondage of the devout.

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Nātha-iti—as the unfailing support, the saviour supreme

Nāgaśayana-iti—as the one reclining on the serpent-couch

jagannivāsa-iti—as the all-pervading Lord of the universe.

Pratipadaṁ ālāpanaṁ māṁ (me) *kuru*—Make me sing (recount your great glory) often.

Mere recital of the Lord's names, bespeaking His many-sided glory of lofty dimensions and auspicious attributes, achieves in this Kaliyuga what could be attained in the preceding Yugas only through hard penance, rigorous rituals, intense meditation and such other tough means. However, even this simple means of *'nāma saṁkīrtana'* is not resorted to, by the poet, on his own. As a matter of fact, he does not wish to employ any means other than the Supreme Lord Himself for attaining Him, knowing full well that He is at once the 'Means' and the 'End', rolled into one, the 'Ready Means' *(Siddhopāya)*. Therefore it is, he invokes His grace even for recounting His great glory, time and again. The redoubted Vyāsa, reputed to be an incarnation of Lord Nārāyana, not only codified the Vedas but also compiled under the caption, *'Sahasranāma Stotram' (The Thousand Names)*, among the holy names of Lord Viṣṇu, sung by the sages of great pre-eminence like Sanaka, Sanatkumāra, Nārada etc., (who had a thorough grasp of the cream and essence of the Vedas) and thoughtfully incorporated it in his great epic 'Mahābhārata', looked upon as the 'fifth veda'. *'Stotram'* (serial number 686) is one of these thousand names, signifying that the Supreme Lord is 'praise' itself, being the fountain-source, motivating the devout to eulogise Him for His own delectation, as denoted by the immediately preceding name (685), labelling Him as *'stava priyaḥ'*—one who relishes being praised by the devout, who are none other than the instruments of His own choice, activated by Him. When the Lord appeared before the young child, Dhruva, who was doing penance for securing the Lord's presence and obtaining from Him the boon in view, poor child, he was struck dumb with awe and could not mouth a single word. However, when the

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Lord lovingly touched the cheek of the child with His Conch, that very moment words of praise flowed from Dhruva's juvenile mouth, in torrents.

It is noteworthy that the invocation of Lord's grace begins with the address, *Śrī Vallabhī!* (Lakṣmi's favourite). Actually, it is this favourable factor that makes Him '*Varada*', the bounteous bestower of boons to the supplicant, as well as the '*Dayā para*', who forgives the truckloads of sins of the supplicant, standing at his door-step, backed up by the Divine Mother's (Lakṣmi's) grace as the usherer. But for such a propitious setting, the Lord, on His own, might not be inclined to call into play that extra-ordinary trait of His, '*Vātsalya*' (tender solicitude) which keeps Him oblivious to the massive sins of the supplicant and thus renders the mediation of the Divine Mother effective.

'*Nāga śayanam*' refers to the Vyūha aspect of Lord Nārāyaṇā in the Milk-ocean, the seat of His creative activity. This is one of His five hypostatic manifestations. '*Jagannivāsa*' depicts the Lord in His transcendent *(para)* aspect in the High Heaven as the Sovereign Master and sole ordainer of the universe with all its contents, mobile and stationary. The other manifestations of the Lord are '*Antaryāmi*', where the Lord pervades all things and beings as the in-dweller, not visible to the naked, fleshy eyes; '*Vibhava*', His incarnate forms as Varāha, Narasimha, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa etc., and '*Arcā*', His iconic manifestation in the idols, self-projected or duly consecrated in accordance with the relative rites and rituals by various agencies, Siddhas, Rishis, humans etc.

Victory, Victory unto Thee, My Lord!

जयतु जयतु देवो देवकीनन्दनोऽयं
जयतु जयतु कृष्णो वृष्णिवंशप्रदीपः ।
जयतु जयतु मेघश्यामलः कोमलाङ्गो
जयतु जयतु पृथ्वीभारनाशो मुकुन्दः ॥ २ ॥

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Jayatu Jayatu devo Devakīnandano ayaṁ
Jayatu Jayatu Kṛṣṇo Vṛṣṇivaṁśapradīpaḥ
Jayatu Jayatu meghaśyāmalaḥ komaḷāṅgo
Jayatu Jayatu pṛthvī bhāranāśo Mukudaḥ

Victory, Victory unto Devaki's celestial darling,
Victory, Victory unto Kṛṣṇa, the beacon-light of Vṛṣṇi's clan,
Victory, Victory unto Him, the cloud-hued, of body charming,
Victory, Victory unto Mukunda who rid clean
The Earth of its unwholesome burden.

Ayaṁ Devakīnandanaḥ Devaḥ jayatu jayatu, Vṛṣṇivaṁsa pradīpaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ jayatu jayatu; meghaśyāmalaḥ komalāṅgaḥ jayatu, jayatu; pṛthvībhāranāśaḥ Mukundaḥ jayatu jayatu.

Jayatu jayatu Devaḥ—May the Deva be victorious, victorious !
Ayaṁ Devakīnandanaḥ—This Devaki's darling
Jayatu jayatu Kṛṣṇaḥ—May Kṛṣṇa be victorious, victorious !
Vṛṣṇivaṁśa pradīpaḥ –The beacon-light of Vṛṣṇi's clan
Meghaśyāmalaḥ—dark like the water-laden cloud
Komalāṅgaḥ—possessed of a charming body, soft and silken
Jayatu jayatu—May (He) be victorious, victorious !
Mukundaḥ—Mukunda
Pṛthvībhāranāśaḥ—who rid the Earth clean of its burden
Jayatu jayatu—May (He) be victorious, victorious !

Repetition of the word 'jayatu' denotes the exuberance of the poet, on the threshold of his laudation of the Lord, with a keen awareness of the Lord's essential nature, His might and majesty, his own essential nature and their inter-relationship, as

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set out in the opening śloka. The Supreme Lord, the Sovereign Master of the universe, incarnated as Kṛṣṇa, the cloud-hued, of exquisite charm, Devaki's darling, who crossed over to Nanda's home, the very same night on which He took birth and mingled freely with the shepherds and shepherdesses of Vṛṣṇi clan, displaying amazing simplicity. The poet, lost in admiration of this extra-ordinary phenomenon, the simplicity (easy accessibility) galore of the Supreme Lord, much beyond the ken of comprehension of even the exalted Devas, Brahma, Rudra and others, sings this song of benediction that He shall ever be victorious. Pondering over the purpose of Lord Kṛṣṇa's advent on Earth, the poet gives expression to his awareness of the purpose, namely, ridding Mother Earth of her unwholesome burden in the shape of the wicked and the vicious, indulging in intemperate habits.

The only thing, prayed for by me

मुकुन्द मूर्ध्ना प्रणिपत्य याचे
भवन्तमेकान्तमियन्तमर्थम् ।
अविस्मृतिस्त्वच्चरणारविन्दे
भवे भवे मेऽस्तु भवत्प्रसादात् ॥ ३ ॥

Mukunda ! mūrdhnā praṇipatya yāce
Bhavantamekāntamiyantamartham
Avismṛtiḥ tvaccaraṇāravinde
Bhave bhave me astu bhavatprasādāt

I bow at Thy feet, O Mukunda ! and beg
Of Thee this and only this, that in each leg (span)
Of my life I be by Thee blest
That I forget not Thy lotus feet.

Hey Mukunda ! mūrdhnā praṇipatya bhavantaṁ iyantaṁ ekāntaṁ arthaṁ yāce, bhavatprasādāt me bhave bhave tvaccaraṇāravinde avismṛtiḥ astu.

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Hey Mukunda!—O, Mukunda !
Mūrdhnā—By my head ; *praṇipatya*—bowing ;
bhavantaṁ—of you ; *iyantaṁ*—this ;
ekāntaṁ—clinched to this single one (this alone) ;
arthaṁ—wealth ; *yāce*—I beg ; (that is)
bhavatprasādāt—by your grace ; *Me*—unto me ;
bhave bhave—birth after birth
tvaccaraṇāravinde—on your lotus feet
avismṛtiḥ astu—let there be no forgetfulness, that is snapping of my meditation.

Having exhibited his selfless devotion through the song of benediction (Śloka 2), the poet makes the following submission to the Lord, at close quarters, reverently laying his head at His feet :

"O, Mukundā ! you are indeed the granter of bliss, here and yonder. It is your sole prerogative to grant the eternal bliss of Mokṣa, the final emancipation from the earthly bondage. With my truckloads of sins I can hardly aspire for Mokṣa, as such. All the same, I beg of you, in confidence, just this much and nothing more. May it please you to ensure that, in every one of my births, my mind shall remain rivetted to your lotus feet, without intermission. There is indeed no greater bliss for me than staying steadfast in this stance, nothing more sustaining than this."

The poet's ardour, in this regard, gets reinforced, gathers momentum in the five succeeding ślokas as well as ślokas 10 and 20.

I worship Thee for no personal ends but for achieving selfless devotion

नाहं वन्दे तव चरणयोर्द्वन्द्वमद्वन्द्वहेतोः
कुम्भीपाकं गुरुमपि हरे नारकं नापनेतुम् ।
रम्या रामा मृदुतनुलता नन्दने नापि रन्तुं
भावे भावे हृदयभवने भावयेयं भवन्तम् ॥ ४ ॥

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Nāhaṁ vande tava caraṇayordvandvamadvandvahetoḥ
Kumbhīpākaṁ gurumapi Hare! nārakaṁ nāpanetum
Ramyā rāmā mṛdutanulatā nandane nāpi rantuṁ
Bhāve bhāve hṛdayabhavane bhavayeyam bhavantam

O, Hari, I worship Thy pair of feet, not to overcome
The twin operation of pain and pleasure, nor even
To escape drudging in the dire hell, kumbhīpākam
Or dally with damsels, soft and sweet, in Indra's garden
But to keep you enshrined in my heart, span after span.

Hey Hare! ahaṁ tava caraṇayoḥ dvandvaṁ advandva hetoḥ na vande; gurum nārakaṁ kumbhīpākaṁ apanetuṁ api na; mṛdu-tanulatāḥ ramyaḥ rāmāḥ nandane rantuṁ api na; bhāve bhāve hṛdayabhavane bhavantaṁ bhāvayeyam.

Hey Hare!—O, Hari!
tavacaraṇayoh dvandvaṁ—Your pair of feet
advandvahetoḥ—as a means for (elevation to Mokṣa) avoiding the impact of the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain and so on.
ahaṁ—I; *na vande*—do not worship;
guruṁ—dreadful; *nārakaṁ kumbhīpākaṁ*—drudging in the torture chambers of (the gruesome hell) kumbhīpākam;
apanetuṁ api—to avoid; *na* (vande)—(I) worship not;
mṛdu tanu latāḥ—possessed of body (tanu), soft (mṛdu) and lovely like a tendril (latāḥ)
ramyāḥ—beautiful; *rāmāḥ*—damsels (apsarās);
nandane—Even in the *nandana* garden or the celestial garden
rantuṁ api—caressing or dallying with, indulging in sensual pleasures;
na—(I) do not worship;
bhāve bhāve—in every birth (birth after birth);
hṛdaya bhavane—in the mansion (temple) of my heart;
bhavantaṁ bhāvayeyam—may I keep meditating Thee

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In the preceding śloka, the poet disclosed that his sole concern was to keep meditating on the Lord's lotus feet, incidentally revealing that he had risen above the domain of pain (sufferings in hell or on earth itself) and pleasure (pleasures attainable here and in the yonder *svarga*) and was, therefore, just as indifferent to the one as to the other. Now he gives expression to that in so many words. As a follow-up of his request in the previous śloka, the poet prays that he be blessed by the Lord so as to enshrine Him in his heart for ever. With the Lord's lotus feet embedded in the poet's thoughts without intermission and the Lord Himself lodged in his heart so as to ensure the stability and solidity of his rapport with Him, the poet is least concerned with anything else such as the termination of the dreadful cycle of birth and death or to his continual exposure to pain and pleasure, incidental to one's existence in the material body.

Selfless, steadfast devotion into Thee is my only need

नास्था धर्मे न वसुनिचये नैव कामोपभोगे
यद्यद् भव्यं भवतु भगवन् पूर्वकर्मानुरूपम् ।
एतत् प्रार्थ्यं मम बहुमतं जन्मजन्मान्तरेऽपि
त्वत्पादांभोरुहयुगगता निश्चला भक्तिरस्तु ॥ ५ ॥

Nāsthā dharme na vasunicaye naiva kāmopabhoge
Yadyad bhavyaṁ bhavatu Bhagavan ! pūrvakarmānurūpam
Etat prārthyaṁ mama bahumataṁ janmajanmāntare api
Tvatpādāṁbhoruha yugagatā niścalā bhaktirastu

O, Bhagavan ! neither am I inclined to dharma
Nor to riches, nor to the pleasures sensual,
Let me, as I should, reap the fruits of my karma ;
Yet, the only thing unto me most delightful,
I do pray for, is devotion deep and perennial
Unto your lovely pair of feet, in my births,
one and all.

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Bhagavan! me dharme āsthā na; vasunicaye (āsthā) na; kāmopabhoge (āsthā) naiva; pūrva karmānurūpam yadyat bhavyaṁ bhavatu; mama bahumataṁ etat prārthyaṁ tvatpāda ambhoruha yugagatā bhaktiḥ janmajanmāntarepi niścalā astu.

Hey Bhagavan!—O, Bhagavan, possessed of the six principal attributes, namely—knowledge, strength, sovereignty, valour, energy and power.

me—for me; *dharme*—for dharma.

āsthā—desire or taste; *na*—is not;

vasunicaye—the worldly riches which contribute to material comforts

āsthā na—not desired (either);

kāmopabhoge—(desire for) enjoyment of sensual pleasures; *naiva*—not at all;

pūrvakarmānurūpam—in terms of (my) previous karmās (acts, good and bad),

yadyat—whatever, *bhavyam*—is to happen, *bhavatu*—let it happen;

mama bahumataṁ—unto me highly delectable,

Etat—(is) this alone; *prārthyaṁ*—and hence (deserves to be prayed ror) my prayer;

Tvatpāda ambhoruha yugagatā bhaktiḥ—(My) devotion which converges on your pair of lotus feet,

niścala astu—Be it perennial.

It is indeed remarkable that the hymnographer is not after any of the four ultimate values (Puruṣārthās), commonly sought, namely, 'Dharma' (righteousness), 'artha' (wealth), 'kāma' (desire for the good things of life, here and hereafter) and 'Mokṣa' (emancipation from the earthly bondage, the dreadful cycle of birth and death). On the other hand, the one and only thing he seeks is perpetual link with the Lord's lotus feet, under all circumstances, no matter where, what and how he might be. This, in essence, was the poet's submission in the preceding śloka itself and he now makes it clear that nothing delights him

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more than the constant contemplation of the Lord's lovely pair of feet and hence his current prayer, duly clinched. [See also stanza 104 of Rāmānuca nūṟṟantati].

How graceful of Thee ! Thou makest me remember Thee even in my hour of death

दिवि वा भुवि वा ममास्तु वासो
नरके वा नरकान्तक ! प्रकामम् ।
अवधीरित-शारदारविन्दौ
चरणौ ते मरणेऽपि चिन्तयामि ॥ ६ ॥

Divi vā bhuvi vā mamāstu vāso
narake vā Narakāntaka ! prakāmam
Avadhīrita-śāradāravindau
Caraṇau te maraṇe api cintayāmi

Let it very much be, O Destroyer of hell !
That I stay in Svarga, Earth or Hell ;
Comfort do I take that my thoughts dwell
On Your lovely pair of feet, which excelleth
The autumnal lotus, even in my hour of death.

Narakāntaka ! mama divi va bhuvi vā narake vā vāsaḥ prakāmam astu ; avadhīrita śāradāravindau te caraṇau maraṇe api cintayāmi.

Hey Narakāntaka !—O, Destroyer of hell (or hellish existence over here)
Divi vā—in Svarga or
Bhuvi vā—in Earth or
Narake vā—in hell or (anywhere else)
prakāmaṁ astu—Let it very much be
avadhīrita śāradāravindau—which excel (the charm of) the autumnal (bloom of the) lotus flower
te—your ; *caraṇau*—feet

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maraṇe api even in my last moments (at the time of death)
cintayāmi (I) meditate upon.

The poet's prayer in the two preceding ślokas has been heard by the Lord. That is why the poet now avers that he shall be in a position to meditate on the Lord's charming lotus feet even in his dying moments, when most people are lying insensate like a piece of wood or stone. With such a perennial rapport with the Lord's lotus feet, it matters not to the poet where exactly he dwells, Earth, Svarga or Hell. Narakāntaka, in the śloka, could mean either the slayer of Narakāsura or the destroyer of Naraka (hell), that is, deflector of the devotee's descent into hell. Svarga is the place, exclusively for the enjoyment of the reward for 'Puṇya' (meritorious acts) performed by the individual. Hell is the very antithesis of Svarga and is thus a place, meant exclusively for suffering the punishments for 'Sins' (evil acts) committed by the individual. Earth is the *via media* where the effects of 'Sins' are currently experienced besides reaping the fruits of 'Puṇya', the two channels operating, side by side, a fragment from each, out of the individual's age-long accumulation of 'Puṇya' and 'Pāpa' (Sins) having started yielding results.

Let my mind be impounded in the cage (Thy lotus feet) right now

कृष्ण ! त्वदीय पदपङ्कज पञ्जरान्तम्
अद्यैव मे विशतु मानस राजहंसः ।
प्राणप्रयाणसमये कफवातपित्तैः
कण्ठावरोधन-विधौ स्मरणं कुतस्ते ॥ ७ ॥

Kṛṣṇa ! tvadīya padapaṅkaja pañjarāntam
Adyaiva me viśatu mānasa rājahaṁsaḥ
Prāṇaprayāṇasamaye kaphavātapittaiḥ
Kaṇṭhāvarodhana-vidhau smaraṇaṁ kutaste

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O, Kṛṣṇa! let my mind, the regal swan,
Enter the cage, Thy lotus feet, now alone;
How can it think of Thee when life ebbeth out,
Phlegm, wind and bile choking the throat?

Kṛṣṇa! tvadīya padapaṅkaja pañjara antam me mānasa rājahaṁsaḥ adyaiva viśatu; prāṇaprayāṇa samaye kaphavāta-pittaiḥ kaṇṭhāvarodhana vidhau te smaraṇaṁ kutaḥ?

Hey Kṛṣṇā!—O, Kṛṣṇa!

tvadīya—your; *padapaṅkaja pañjara antam*—inside the cage of your lotus feet,

me—my, *mānasa rājahaṁsaḥ*—mind, the royal swan,

adyaiva—right now, *viśatu*—let (it) enter,

prāṇaprayāṇa samaye—when life goes out (on its next journey)

kaphavāta pittaiḥ—by phlegm, wind and bile

Kaṇṭhāvarodhana vidhau when the throat gets choked

te—your, *smaraṇaṁ*—remembrance, *kutaḥ*—how can there be?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa having graciously responded to the poet's sincere entreaty in the preceding ślokas, the poet's mind is now in close proximity to the Lord's lotus feet. Because of the inherent tendency of the human mind to wander here and there, it is compared to a bird, a royal swan at that, as the Supreme Lord, king of all kings, is the rightful owner of us all. Lest the poet's co-operative mind should undergo any aberration by force of circumstances and stray away, he prays that it (the royal Swan) be secured by putting it right now inside the cage, figuratively denoting the Lord's lotus feet. Apart from the (figurative) bird losing its very mobility, in course of time, it will become defunct altogether when death descends on it, with the attendant infirmities. No doubt, in the immediately preceding śloka, the poet had averred that he shall be in a position to meditate on the Lord even in his hour of death. It is not as if he has since lost ground. What he is now alluding to, rather apprehending is the frightful possibility of getting crippled by the physical forces and the possible aberration of the notoriously fickle mind.

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On Lord Hari do I meditate always

चिन्तयामि हरिमेव सन्ततं
मन्दमन्द हसिताननाम्बुजम् ।
नन्दगोप तनयं परात्परं
नारदादि मुनिबृन्द वन्दितम् ॥ ८ ॥

Cintayāmi Harimeva santataṁ
mandamanda hasitānanāmbujam
Nandagopa tanayaṁ parātparaṁ
Nāradādi munibṛnda vanditam

On Nandā's son do I meditate always,
Him that wears gentle smile on His lotus face,
Destroyer of sins, the Supreme Lord,
Worshipped by sages of the eminence of Nārada

Manda manda hasita ānanāmbujam Nandagopa tanayaṁ parātparaṁ Naradādi muni bṛnda vanditam Harimeva (aham) santataṁ cintayāmi.

Manda manda hasita ānanāmbujam—(Him that) wears a gentle smile on a face, beaming like a lotus in full bloom;

Nandagopa tanayaṁ—(Who is) son of Nandagopa

parāt param—the Supreme Lord, higher than the highest;

Nāradādi muni bṛnda vanditam—(Who is) worshipped by sages of the eminence of Nārada;

Harimeva—(Him) Hari alone, the great Redeemer, destroyer of the sins of the devout;

(ahaṁ)—I; *santataṁ*—always; *cintayāmi*—meditate upon.

In this śloka, the poet gives vent to his gratification in being able to meditate on Lord Hari (Vishṇu), the destroyer of sins, all the time. The Supreme Lord is higher than the

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highest, bigger than the biggest and is, therefore, much beyond the mental comprehension and vocal appreciation of even the eminent sages who nevertheless laud Him to their utmost, even then touching only a fringe of His glory. Side by side, He exhibits His simplicity galore, coming face to face with the lowest of the lowly, as Nandagopa's son. The poet highlights, in this śloka, the unique combination of supremacy and amiability (simplicity galore), perceptible in none but Lord Viṣṇu.

Where and how to bathe and feel fully refreshed

करचरणसरोजे कान्तिमन्नेत्रमीने
श्रममुषि भुजवीचिव्याकुलेऽगाधमार्गे ।
हरिसरसि विगाह्यापीय तेजोजलौघं
भवमरुपरिखिन्नः खेदमद्य त्यजामि ॥ ९ ॥

Karacaraṇasaroje kāntimannetramīne
Śramamuṣi bhujavīcivyākule agādhamārge
Harisarasi vigāhyāpīya tejojalaugham
Bhavamaruparikhinnaḥ khedamadya tyajāmi

Parched up by the arid desert of family ties,
the earthly mesh,
Plunge do I into Hari, the tank, deep,
cool and refreshing;
His hands and feet symbolise the lotus and
His dazzling eyes, the fishes,
His sinewy shoulders are like unto rippling waves,
Drinking the water of His effulgence,
rid am I of erstwhile woes.

Kara caraṇa saroje kāntimannetra mīne śramamuṣi bhujavīcivyākule agādha mārge Hari Sarasi vigāhya tejo jalaugham āpīya (aham) bhavamaruparikhinnaḥ khedam adya tyajami.

Karacaraṇasaroje—(Whose) hands and feet are like the lotus flower.

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Kāntimannetramīne—(Whose) dazzling eyes are like the lustrous fishes.

Śramamuṣi bhujavīcivyākule — (Whose) invigorating shoulders are like unto surging waves.

agādha mārge —having deep route

Hari sarasi vigāhya —diving into Hari, the lotus tank.

tejo jalaugham āpīya—(and) having drunk the water, symbolic of Lord Hari's effulgence.

(aham) —I ; *bhavamaruparikhnnaḥ*—badly parched up by the arid desert of family bondage.

adya —now ; *khedam*—suffering ; *tyajāmi*—do give up.

Lord Hari's (Viṣṇu's) exquisite form is likened to a tank, studed with lotus flowers, as His complexion is like that of emerald or water-laden cloud, His hands and feet resemble the lotus flowers in full bloom, His longish eyes look like the flashy fishes and His sinewy shoulders are like unto the ripples in the tank. Rivetted as he now is, in word, deed and thought, to the Lord's exquisite charm, the poet now feels amply requited. This is true not only of the poet but of all those similarly situated. Parched up awfully in the arid desert of samsāra (family, rather earthly bondage in a mundane setting), the ardent devotee finds a sure oasis in the Divine person of exquisite charm, ever fresh like the lotus flower, in fresh bloom and, therefore, fully refreshing. As a matter of fact, the ever-free angels (*Nitya sūrīs*) and the released souls (muktās) in the high heaven keep drinking deep of the perennial charm of the Lord, in the transcendental form, without even batting their eyelids lest the marvellous rapport between them and the Lord should get snapped during the twinkle of the eye. It is indeed the incessant flow of the marvellous communication from that inexhaustible fountain of bliss, the Supreme Lord that keeps the ever-free angels and other denizens in Heaven spell-bound, beholding Hari, all the time with no break !

'*Sadā Paśhyanti Sūrayaḥ*' — Puruṣa Sūkta of Taittirīya Upaniṣad.

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My mind! be wrapt in blissful rapport with Murari;
I know not anything more pleasurable

सरसिजनयने सशङ्खचक्रे
मुरभिदि मा विरमस्व चित्त ! रन्तुम् ।
सुखतरमपरं न जातु जाने
हरिचरण स्मरणामृतेन तुल्यम् ॥ १० ॥

Sarasija nayane saśaṅkha cakre
Murabhidi mā viramasva citta ! rantuṁ
Sukhataramaparaṁ na jātu jāne
Haricaraṇa smaraṇāmṛtena tulyaṁ

Cease you shall never, my mind!
From blissful rapport with Murāri, the lotus-eyed,
Who does the conch and discus wield;
I've never known anything more pleasurable indeed
Than the nectarean contemplation of Hari's feet,

Citta! sarasija nayane saśaṅkha cakre Murabhidi rantuṁ mā viramasva; (yataḥ) Haricaraṇa smaraṇāmṛtena tulyaṁ aparaṁ sukhataraṁ jātu na jāne.

Hey citta!—my mind
Sarasija nayane saśaṅkha cakre—the lotus-eyed, wielding the conch and discus
Murabhidi rantuṁ—communing blissfully with that Hari, the slayer of the demon Mura,
mā viramasva—do not give up
(yataḥ)—because
Haricaraṇa smaraṇāmṛtena tulyaṁ—the equivalent of nectarean contemplation of Lord Hari's feet
aparaṁ—anything else
Sukhataraṁ—of greater bliss
jātu—never, *na jane*— (I) know not.

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The secret of the poet's non-satiate longing for incessant communion with the Lord's lotus feet is revealed in this śloka. He finds no greater pleasure in anything else or even anything equal to that. The poet having obtained from the Benign Lord what he longed for, he now counsels his mind not to lose its hold on the Lord's feet at any time hereafter, there being no greater pleasure than the nectarean Contemplation of Lord Hari's feet without intermission. The lotus eyes are the media through which the Lord reveals His tender solicitude *(vātsalya)* for the devout; the conch and discus are both ornamental (decorating the Lord's person) and weapons of rare excellence, ever alert to quell the enemies of devout, the slaying of the demon Mura, by the Lord illustrating the point.

Dread not, you stupid mind, the torments at Yama's hands

माभीर्मन्दमनो विचिन्त्य बहुधा यामीश्चिरं यातनाः
नामी नः प्रभवन्ति पापरिपवः स्वामी ननु श्रीधरः ।
आलस्यं व्यपनीय भक्तिसुलभं ध्यायस्व नारायणं
लोकस्य व्यसनापनोदनकरो दासस्य किं न क्षमः ॥११॥

Mābhīrmandamano vicintya Bahudhā yāmīściraṁ yātanāḥ
Nāmī naḥ prabhavanti pāparipavaḥ svāmī nanu Śrīdharaḥ
Ālasyaṁ vyapanīya bhaktisulabhaṁ dhyāyasva Nārāyaṇaṁ
Lokasya vyasanāpanodanakaro dāsasya kiṁ na kṣamaḥ?

Do not, ye stupid mind! ruminate long hours
And dread at Yamā's hands punishments sour;
Verily, those foes of sinners go impotent as Śridhara
Is our Lord; Him too easy to attain thro' devotion
Shake off lethargy and be steeped in meditation
Of Nārāyaṇa, who does the distress dispel
Of the worldlings; can't He His devotees' miseries expel?

(Hey) mandamanaḥ! yāmiḥ yātanāḥ ciraṁ bahudhā vicintya mābhiḥ pāparipavaḥ amī naḥ prabhavanti Śrīdharaḥ svāmī nanu?

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ālasyaṁ vyapanīya bhaktisulabhaṁ Nārāyaṇaṁ dhyāyasva lokasya vyasanāpanodanakaraḥ dāsasya na kṣamaḥ kiṁ ?

(Hey) *manda manaḥ*—ye, stupid mind!

yāmīḥ yātanāḥ—about the dreadful sufferings in Yamā's land,

ciram—long time, *bahudhā*—in many ways (from different angles),

vicintya—pondering, *mābhīḥ*—do not dread,

amī pāparipavaḥ—these foes of sinners

nā prabhavanti—are powerless, in our case

Śrīdharaḥ svāmī nanu ?—Is not Śrīdhara, the consort of Goddess Lakṣmī, our Master ?

ālasyaṁ vyapanīya—shake off lethargy,

bhakti sulabham—Him; easy of access to the bhakta (devotee)

Nārāyaṇaṁ dhyāyasva—keep meditating on Nārāyaṇa ;

lokasya—of the people of the world (in general)

vyasanāpanodanakaraḥ—dispeller of distress,

dāsasya—unto the devout, solely dependent on Him, as His exclusive vassal,

na kṣamaḥ kim ?—will He be incapable of relieving them of their sufferings ? (will He at all abstain from pardoning their sins and redeeming them ?)

To the superficial reader, this śloka might convey the impression that one can commit sins with impunity and be carefree without dreading the punishments for such sins, rather belittling the prospects of such punishments. The underlying idea is, however, far from that. The emphasis is on the redemptive grace of the Benign Lord, who though, much beyond the easy reach of the 'Jñāna yogins', is easily accessible to the ardent bhakta, indulging in selfless and steadfast devotion. The greatest Donor that the Lord is, He is known to reward vicariously even those, whose minds are turned away from Him, that is, for good acts casually performed by them, unintentionally or accidentally *(ajñāta sukrita* or *yādṛcchika sukrita)* according to

*

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His unique, extra-liberal standards. Such being the case, it is logical to expect Him to rush to the rescue of the devout and relieve them of their sufferings by absolving them of all their sins because of the limitless love He bears towards them. In the latter case, the Lord calls into play that outstanding trait of His, namely, '*vātsalya*' (tender solicitude) turning a blind eye to the truckloads of sins committed by the Bhakta in the days gone by, that is prior to the birth of the conviction that the supreme Lord is his highest goal and that He is at once the 'means' and the 'end' for the attainment of that goal. Surely, the devotee who looks upon Him as the Sole Means for attaining Him, shall shun even '*puṇya*' acquired through self. That being the case, need it be said that he shall abhor sins, even more?

How to ferry across the ocean of Samsara – the Divine boat (visnu pota) the one and only ferry, firm and secure

भवजलधिगतानां द्वन्द्ववाताहतानां
सुतदुहितृकळत्र त्राणभारार्दितानाम् ।
विषमविषयतोये मज्जतामप्लवानां
भवतु शरणमेको विष्णुपोतो नराणाम् ॥ १२ ॥

Bhavajaladhigatānāṁ dvandvavātāhātānāṁ
Suta duhitru kalatra trāṇabhārārditānāṁ
Viṣama viṣayatoye majjatamaplavānāṁ
Bhavatu śaraṇameko Viṣṇupoto narāṇāṁ

Lord Viṣṇu is the one and only boat to ferry across
Those tossed up in saṁsāra, the ocean bottomless,
And caught up in the whirlwind of pleasure and pain
And the like pairs, weighed down by care of protection of son,
Daughter, wife and others and in the turbulent waters lost,
With the ups and downs of pleasures sensual, with hardly a raft.

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Bhavajaladhi gatānāṁ dvandvavatāhatānāṁ suta, duhitru, kalatra trāṇabhāra arditānāṁ viṣama viṣaya toye majjatāṁ aplavānāṁ narāṇāṁ Viṣṇu potaḥ ekaḥ śaraṇaṁ bhavatu.

Bhavajaladhi gatānāṁ—Fallen into the ocean of saṁsāra, that is, earthly bondage,

dvandva vātā hatānaṁ—smitten by the whirlwind of the twin operation of pain and pleasure and the like pairs of opposites,

Suta, duhitru, kalatra trāṇabhāṛā arditānāṁ—weighed down by the care of protection of son, daughter, wife and others,

Viṣama viṣaya toye—In the ups and downs of the watery depths of sensual pleasures,

majjatām—sunk deep down,

aplavānāṁ—with no raft (float to get ashore)

narāṇāṁ—for the humans,

ekaḥ viṣṇu potaḥ –(there is) only the boat, known as Viṣṇu

śaraṇaṁ bhavatu—may (it) become the Refuge

Continuing the rapport with his mind, the poet assures it that the one and only boat to take one, sunk in the deep waters of *saṁsāra*, ashore is Lord Viṣṇu and that He should, therefore, be the sole Refuge for him and the teeming millions, similarly situated. The miserable plight of the earth-bound, sense-buried souls is also indicated here to show that the omni-potent benign Lord alone can lift them up from those appalling depths. The folks, fallen into the ocean of *saṁsāra* (earthly bondage), are tossed up by the whirlwind of the twin operation of pain and pleasure, heat and cold and the like pairs of opposites, get bogged down by the care of protection of son, daughter, wife and other dependents and above all, there is the tragedy of their submergence in the turbulent waters of sensual pleasures, with their terrific ups and downs, having no float of their own to fall back upon for getting ashore.

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Devotion deep unto the lotus-eyed Lord will take me ashore, sure and fast

भवजलधिं अगाधं दुस्तरं निस्तरेयं
कथमहमिति चेतो मास्मगाः कातरत्वम् ।
सरसिजदृशि देवे तावकी भक्तिरेका
नरकभिदि निषण्णा तारयिष्यत्यवश्यम् ॥ १३ ॥

Bhavajaladhiṁ agādhaṁ dustaraṁ nistareyaṁ
Kathamahamiti ceto māsmagāḥ kātaratvam
Sarasijadṛśi Deve tāvakī bhaktirekā
Narakabhidi niṣaṇṇā tārayiṣyatyavaśyam

Despair not, my mind, how indeed we shall ford
The unfordable ocean of *saṁsāra*, deep and vast;
By itself your devotion deep unto the lotus-eyed Lord
Who slew the demon Naraka, will take us across,
sure and fast

(Hey) cetaḥ agādhaṁ dustaraṁ bhavajaladhiṁ ahaṁ kathaṁ nistareyaṁ iti kātaratvaṁ māsmagāḥ sarasijadṛśi Narakabhidi Deve niṣaṇṇā tāvakī bhaktiḥ ekā avaśyam tārayiṣyati.

Hey cetaḥ—you, my mind!, *agādham*—deep, *dustaram*—unfordable,

bhavajaladhiṁ—ocean of *saṁsāra* (the mesh of life over here)

ahaṁ—I, *kathaṁ*—how, *nistareyaṁ*—shall cross over,

kātaratvaṁ māsmagāḥ—do not get afraid,

Sarasija dṛśi—the lotus-eyed, *Narakabhidi*—slayer of Narakāsura,

Deve—unto the Deva (victorious Lord), *niṣāṇṇā*—laid deep,

tāvakī—your, *Bhaktih ekā*—devotion alone (by itself),

avaśyaṁ tārayiṣyati—will surely take (you) across.

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The Lord's lotus eyes reveal His immense love for his devotees and thus assuage the fears of the devotee, sunk deep in the mire of *saṁsāra*, as to how at all he could climb up and attain to Him. The poet feels assured that his steadfast devotion at the lovely feet of the lotus-eyed Lord is the sure solvent for all his ills and evils and can, by itself, lift him up to the Lord's lotus feet. Therefore it is, he counsels his mind not to despair in the least and shed the last shred of fear regarding the prospects of his salvation. In the preceding śloka, Viṣṇu, the Divine Boat was mentioned as the only one to ford us across the ocean of *saṁsāra* (cutting out the operation of the dreadful cycle of birth, death and rebirth and the mixed fare of pain and pleasure, in between). Emphasising the potentiality of devotion, the poet now avers that one's devotion to the Lord can, by itself, deliver the goods, that is, lift one ashore and put him at the Lord's lotus feet, high up in the heaven.

Deign to deliver, O Lord, the boat of devotion at your lotus feet

तृष्णातोये मदनपवनोद्धूतमोहोर्मिमाले
दारावर्ते तनयसहजग्राहसंघाकुले च ।
संसाराख्ये महति जलधौ मज्जतां नस्त्रिधामन्
पादाम्भोजे वरद भवतो भक्तिनावं प्रयच्छ ॥ १४ ॥

Tṛṣṇātoye madanapavanoddhūtamohormimāle
dārāvarte tanaya sahaja grāhasaṅghākule ca
Saṁsārākhye mahati jaladhau majjatāṁ nastridhāman
pādāmbhoje varada ! bhavato bhaktināvaṁ prayaccha

O Lord, abiding in all the worlds, the granter great of boons !
Unto us in *saṁsāra* drowned, that vast ocean,
Which the waters of desire impound, throwing up billows of temptation,
By the winds of cupidity fanned, and abound in the eddy of consort

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And hordes of crocodiles, sons, brothers and all that sort,
Deign to deliver the boat of devotion at thy lotus feet

(Hey) Tridhāman, (Hey) Varada! tṛṣṇātoye madana pawana uddhūta moha ūrmimāle dārāvarte tanaya sahaja grāha-saṅgha ākule ca saṁsārākhye mahati jaladhou majjatāṁ naḥ bhava-taḥ pādāmbhoje bhaktināvaṁ prayaccha.

(Hey) *Tridhāman!*—O, Lord, abiding in all the three worlds!

(Hey) *Varada!*—O, Granter of boons!

Tṛṣṇātoye—filled with water in the shape of *(self-centred)* desires (greed, ambition etc.)

madana–pavana–uddhūta moha ūrmimāle—(and) arrays of waves in the form of temptations, fanned by the whirlwind of lust,

Dārā varte—(and) the whirlpool called wife,

tanaya sahaja grāhasaṅgha ākule ca—abounding in hordes of crocodiles, the sons, brothers etc.

Saṁsāra ākhye mahati jaladhou—inside the big ocean, called *saṁsāra* (earthly bondage),

majjatāṁ naḥ—unto us getting drowned,

bhakti nāvaṁ—the boat of devotion,

bhavatah pādāmbhoje—at your lotus feet,

prayaccha—Deign to deliver.

In the preceding śloka the poet exhorted his mind to be sanguine of his salvation through steadfast devotion unto the lotus-eyed Lord. However, seeing his mind, still in the grip of diffidence, the poet reinforces the efficacy of Bhakti as the one and only means of lifting one up to His lotus feet, dispelling side by side, the dread of prolonged submergence in the ocean of *saṁsāra* (earthly bondage). Even so, the poet invokes the Lord's grace for making him tread the path of 'Bhakti' (loving devotion to Him), seeing that one cannot secure the '*Bhaktināvam*', the boat of devotion as one takes out from a boat-club. Hence, the

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supplication, as above; see also śloka 1 wherein the poet invoked the Lord's grace to induce in him the very inclination to recite His holy names.

The solemn resolve—what the poet shall see not, hear not, think not and omit not

मादृक्षं क्षीणपुण्यान् क्षणमपि भवतो भक्तिहीनान् पदाब्जे
मा श्रौषं श्राव्यबन्धं तव चरितमपास्याऽन्यदाख्यानजातम् ।
मास्मार्षं माधव त्वामपि भुवनपते चेतसाऽपह्नुवानान्
माभूवं त्वत्सपर्या व्यतिकर रहितो जन्मजन्मान्तरेऽपि ॥१५॥

Mādrākṣaṁ kṣīṇapuṇyān kṣaṇamapi bhavato bhakti-hīnān padābje
Māśrauṣaṁ śrāvyabandhaṁ tava caritamapāsya anyadākhyānajātaṁ
Māsmārṣaṁ Mādhava ! tvāmapi Bhuvanapate ! cetasā apahnuvānān
Mābhūvaṁ tvatsaparyā vyatikara rahito janma janmāntare api

O, Mādhava ! behold I shan't for a moment the meritless ones,
Shorn of devotion unto your lotus feet ; narrations I shan't listen
Save the telling ones which do your glory great recount ;
Think I shan't, universal Lord ! those whose impish minds reckon not
Your existence, birth after birth, from your worship refrain I shan't

(Hey) Mādhava ! bhavatāḥ padābje bhaktihīnān kṣīṇapuṇyān kṣaṇamapi mādrākṣam ; śrāvyabandhaṁ tava caritaṁ apāsya anyat ākhyānajātam māśrouṣaṁ ; (hey) Bhuvanapate ! tvāṁ cetasāmapi

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apahnuvānān māsmārṣaṁ ; janmajanmāntare api tvatsaparyā vyatikara rahitaḥ mābhūvaṁ.

Hey Mādhava !—O, Mādhava !
Bhavataḥ padābje—at your lotus feet,
bhakti hīnān—(those) devoid of devotion,
Kṣīṇa puṇyān—(and) denuded of merit, *in toto*,
Kṣaṇamapi—not even a trice, *mādrākṣam*—(I) shall not behold
Śrāvyabandhaṁ—(containing words) delightfully ringing in the ears,
tava caritaṁ apāsya ākhyānajātaṁ anyat—narrations other than these about your glory and grandeur,
māsmārṣaṁ—(my ears) shall not hear,
(Hey) *Bhuvanapate*—O, Lord of the entire universe !
tvaṁ—you, *cetasāṁ api*—even from their minds
apahnuvānān—(who) dislodge, as non-existent
māsmārṣaṁ—(I) shall not (even) think (of those wretches),
janma janmāntarepi—in this as well as (other) future births,
tvatsaparyā vyatikara rahitaḥ—one who refrains from worshipping you,
mābhūvaṁ—(I) shall not become.

The resolution, as above, reveals, no doubt, the firm conviction of the poet. The Lord's grace is however, needed to enable him to adhere to it strictly, at all times. It is indeed a matter of common knowledge that it is much easier to make a resolve than to abide by it, in its entirety. Here then arises the paramount need on the part of the practicant to invoke the Lord's benign grace so as not to slip back to the old ways and commit transgressions of the kind from which the poet has now resolved to desist.

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In the service of the Lord—the ordained functions of the various limbs of the subject

जिह्वे कीर्तय केशवं मुररिपुं चेतो भज श्रीधरं
पाणिद्वन्द्व समर्चयाच्युत कथाः श्रोत्रद्वय त्वं शृणु ।
कृष्णं लोकय लोचनद्वय हरेर्गच्छांघ्रियुग्मालयं
जिघ्र घ्राण मुकुन्दपादतुलसीं मूर्धन् नमाधोक्षजम् ॥१६॥

Jihve kīrtaya keśavaṁ, Muraripuṁ ceto bhaja, Śrīdharaṁ
Pāṇi dvandva samarcaya, Acyuta kathāḥ śrotradvaya tvaṁ śruṇu,
Kṛṣṇaṁ lokaya locanadvaya, Harergacchāṅghri yugmālayaṁ,
Jighra ghrāṇa Mukunda pādatulasīṁ, mūrdhan namādhokṣajaṁ

Come on, my tongue, sing you shall Keśava's glory great;
And you, my mind, adore you shall Murāri highly adorable,
Ye shall, my pair of hands, worship Śrīdhara with ardour great,
Listen, my ears, to the narrations many of Acyuta's exploits,
Behold, my eyes, Kṛṣṇa's perennial charm exquisite,
Proceed reverently, my twin legs, to Lord Hari's temple,
Inhale, my nose, tulasi's odour sweet from Mukunda's feet,
And you, my head, bow down you shall at Adhokṣaja's feet.

Keśava—This would connote:
(a) Lord Kṛṣṇa who slew the demon, Keśi or
(b) The projenitor of kaḥ (Brahma) and Īśā (Śiva) or

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(c) one having beautiful locks of hair or

(d) the dispeller of distress.

Murāri—Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Mura, the demon

Śrīdhara—Lord Mahāviṣṇu on whose winsome chest Śrī (Mahālakṣmi) the Divine Mother, the Goddess of affluence, wealth and prosperity is inseparably poised.

Acyuta—Lord Viṣṇu, the supreme, who never gets parted from His devotees and never lets them down.

Hari—The green-hued Lord Viṣṇu, the destroyer of the sins of the devout.

Tulasi—The aromatic leaf placed at the feet of the Deity, during worship

Adhokṣajaḥ—The supreme Lord Viṣṇu, of unlimited glory and grandeur, *which never get diminished;* He is an inexhaustible fountain of infinite bliss

(Hey) jihve! Keśavaṁ kīrtaya, (hey) cetaḥ! Muraripuṁ bhaja, (hey) pāṇidvandva! Śrīdharaṁ samarcaya, (hey) Śrotradvaya! tvaṁ Acyuta kathāḥ śruṇu, (hey) locanadvaya! Kṛṣṇaṁ lokaya, (hey) aṅghriyugma! Hareḥ ālayaṁ gaccha, (hey) ghrāṇa! Mukundapāda tulasīm jighra, (hey) mūrdhan! Adhokṣajaṁ namaḥ.

(Hey) Jihve!—O, my tongue! *Keśavaṁ kīrtaya*—sing the praise of Keśava,

cetaḥ—you, my mind! *Muraripuṁ bhaja*—adore Lord Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of Mura, the demon,

pāṇi dvandva—you my pair of hands! *Śrīdharaṁ samarcaya*—worship Śrīdhara (Lord Viṣṇu);

śrotra dvaya—O, my pair of ears! *tvaṁ*—you

Acyuta kathāḥ śruṇu—Listen to the stories, that is narrations, highlighting the several exploits of Acyuta, of wondrous magnitude,

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(hey) *locana dvaya !*—ye, my pair of eyes !

Kṛṣṇaṁ lokaya—Behold (drink deep) the exquisite beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa ;

aṅghriyugma !—you, my twin legs !

Hareḥ ālayaṁ—To Lord Hari's temple, *gaccha*—proceed reverently ;

(hey) *ghrāṇa !*—you my nose !

Mukunda pāda tulasiṁ jighra—smell the fragrance of the tulasī leaves, laid at the feet of Lord Mukunda,

(hey) *mūrdhan !*—ye, my head !

Adhokṣajaṁ namaḥ—bow unto Adhokṣaja, Lord Viṣṇu, of undiminishing glory and grandeur.

The human body is indeed the most precious gift of the Supreme Lord. This wonderfully constructed body of ours, with its various limbs and built-in-apparatus is primarily meant for the service of God, that great Donor and the godly. It would be but a fitting tribute to the Creator, that super-abundant Benefactor, if His subjects made use of the various limbs of the body and the mind, the mighty co-ordinater of the respective functions of those limbs, in the manner counselled by the poet, in this śloka. It is noteworthy that King Ambarīṣa also prayed likewise : His mind always dwelt on the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa ; his lips kept reciting the great glory of the Lord ; his hands kept the temples clean while his ears were rivetted to the narration of the stories about Acyuta. How then could any base and unholy thoughts enter the minds of such devotees and defile the body and soul ?

(The wonder drug, the panacea for all ills and evils of mankind)

(Ślokas 17, 24 and 31)

The Drug that cuts out the dreadful cycle of birth, death and rebirth

हे लोकाश्शृणुत प्रसूतिमरणव्याधेश्चिकित्सामिमां
योगज्ञास्समुदाहरन्ति मुनयो यां याज्ञवल्क्यादयः ।

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अन्तर्ज्योतिरमेयमेकममृतं कृष्णाख्यमापीयतां
तत्पीतं परमौषधं वितनुते निर्वाणमात्यन्तिकम् ॥ १७ ॥

He lokāśśṛṇuta prasūtimaraṇavyādheścikitsāmimāṁ
Yogajñāssamudāharanti munayo yāṁ yājñavalkyādayaḥ
Antarjyotirameyamekamamṛtaṁ kṛṣṇākhyamāpīyatāṁ
Tatpītaṁ paramouṣadhaṁ vitanute nirvāṇamātyantikaṁ

Listen, ye folks ! here's the drug peerless,
The one prescribed by sages and yogins like Yājñavalkya,
The remedy sure for birth and death, the dreadful disease :
Drink deep with relish great, the nectar, named Kṛṣṇa,
The inner light of effulgence unlimited,
the ultimate bliss.

Hey lokāḥ prasūtimaraṇa vyādheḥ imāṁ cikitsāṁ śṛṇuta yāṁ yājñavalkyādayaḥ yogajñāḥ munayaḥ samudāharanti antarjyotiḥ ameyaṁ ekaṁ kṛṣṇākhyaṁ amṛtaṁ āpīyatāṁ pītaṁ tat paramouṣadhaṁ ātyantikaṁ nirvāṇaṁ vitanute.

Hey lokāḥ !—ye folks !
prasūtimaraṇavyādheḥ—for the disease of birth and death
imāṁ—this, *cikitsāṁ*—remedy, *śṛṇuta*—listen,
yāṁ—that which, *yajñavalkhyādayaḥ*—Yājñavalkya etc.
yogajnāḥ—well-versed in yogā, *munayaḥ*—sages
samudāharanti—pronounce (spell out)
antarjyotiḥ—the inner effulgence, *ameyaṁ*—unlimited
ekaṁ—the one (unique), *Kṛṣṇākhyaṁ*—the name, Kṛṣṇa
amṛtaṁ—nectarean (sweet to utter),
āpīyatāṁ—let (it) be drunk (with immense relish)
pītaṁ—the one, so drunk

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tat paramouṣadhaṁ—that drug with no superior in the field (Supreme, peerless)

ātyantikaṁ nirvāṇaṁ—the ultimate or eternal (endless), bliss and beatitude

vitanute—confers.

The poet exhorts the fellow-beings around to reap the rich harvest of eternal bliss in the yonder heaven by merely spelling the nectarean name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is but the 'Antaryâmi', the in-dweller, of indescribable effulgence. As a matter of fact, *'Śrī Kṛṣṇa nāma divyāmṛta'* is the authentic remedy prescribed by the eminent sages of yore and yogins of the calibre of Yājñavalkya for curing the dreadful disease of birth and death, occuring in a frightful cycle. This is reinforced in ślokas 24 and 31 and for this reason, all the three ślokas have been dealt with, in juxtaposition.

Krsna, the grand elixir, the antidote for all ailments

व्यामोहप्रशमौषधं मुनिमनोवृत्तिप्रवृत्यौषधं
दैत्येन्द्रार्त्तिकरौषधं त्रिजगतां सञ्जीवनैकौषधम् ।
भक्तात्यन्तहितौषधं भवभयप्रध्वंसनैकौषधं
श्रेयः प्राप्तिकरौषधं पिब मनश्श्रीकृष्णदिव्यौषधम् ॥ २४ ॥

Vyāmohapraśamouṣadhaṁ munimanovṛtti pravṛtyouṣadhaṁ
Daityendrārtikarouṣadhaṁ trijagatāṁ sañjīvanaikouṣadhaṁ
Bhaktātyantahitouṣadhaṁ bhavabhaya pradhvaṁsanaikouṣadhaṁ
Śreyaḥ prāptikarouṣadhaṁ piba manaśśrīkṛṣṇadivyouṣadhaṁ

Spell the name, Kṛṣṇa and drink deep, my mind !
That *draught exquisite,* the *antidote* for the allurements many,
The *elixir-grand* that does the meditation of sages sustain,

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The *potion* that did Diti's diabolic* sons annihilate,
The *wonder drug* on which thrive the denizens in all the worlds,
The *medicine rare* that stands the devout in good stead,
Destroys the dread of *saṁsāra* and doles out benefits aplenty

* Hiraṇyākṣa, Hiraṇyakaśipu etc.

Vyāmoha praśama ouṣadhaṁ, munimanovṛtti pravṛtti ouṣadhaṁ, daityendra ārttikarouṣadhaṁ, trijagatāṁ sañjīvanaikauṣadham bhakta atyanta hita ouṣadhaṁ, bhava bhaya pradhvamsana eka ouṣadhaṁ, śreyaḥ prāptikara ouṣadhaṁ, Śrīkṛṣṇa divya ouṣadham (hey) manaḥ piba.

Vyāmoha praśama ouṣadhaṁ — The medicine, potent enough to overcome the toughest allurements,

Munimanovṛtti pravṛtti ouṣadhaṁ — the medicine that stabilises the attitude of sages and sustains their meditation on Him,

Daityendra ārtikara ouṣadhaṁ—the potion that quelled the diabolic Hiraṇyākṣa etc., the sons of Diti,

trijagatāṁ—for the denizens in all the three worlds,

Sanjīvana eka ouṣadhaṁ—the prime (unique) medicine that redeems and elevates,

bhakta atyanta hita ouṣadhaṁ—the grand elixir that confers a lot of good on the devout,

bhava bhaya pradhvamsana eka ouṣadhaṁ—the unique drug that dispels the dread of earthly bondage with its terrific involment in the cyclic operation of birth and death.

śreyaḥ prāptikara ouṣadhaṁ—the draught that showers a plethora of benefits,

Śrīkṛṣṇa divya ouṣadhaṁ—the wonder drug, the name, 'Śrīkṛṣṇa' from which flows the *amṛta* (ambrosia) in super-abundance, '*Śrīkṛṣṇa divya nāmāmṛta*'.

(hey) manaḥ—O, my mind!

piba—drink (deep).

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The poet addresses alternately his tongue and mind. In the immediately preceding śloka, namely, śloka 23, being dealt with a little later, the poet expatiated on the efficacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa mantra, Kṛṣṇa nāma of immense potentiality and exhorted his tongue to keep uttering that name, sweet and potent. But then, in strict sequence, the tongue utters only what is conceived by the mind. (मनः पूर्वो वागुत्तरः *manaḥ pūrvo vāguttarāḥ)* And so, the poet adheres to that sequence by way of evoking positive response to his appeal and addresses his mind in this śloka to drink deep the '*Śrī Kṛṣṇa divya nāmāmṛta*', the elixir grand, the Sovereign remedy for all our ills and evils. In the chapter, entitled '*The Thousand Names*' *(Sahasranāmā)*, introduced by sage Vyāsa in his marathon epic, 'Mahābhārata', the 288th name of Lord Viṣṇu is '*Ouṣadham*'—medicine and again, the 585th name is '*bheṣajam*'—(also) medicine (for the disease of birth and death) and the very next name (586) is '*Bhiṣak*'—the physician. The Lord is thus an expert in diagnosis as well as treatment, "O, Bhagavān! You are indeed the recipe for the Sāmsārik woes and You not only hand out the prescription but also dispense the medicine to those who concentrate on You, as their 'Be-all' and 'End-all'"

Give up the earthly drugs and have recourse to 'Srikrsna divya namamrta', the potion, par excellence, exclusively

इदं शरीरं परिणामपेशलं पतत्यवश्यं श्लथसन्धिजर्जरम् ।
किमौषधैः क्लिश्यसि मूढ दुर्मते निरामयं कृष्णरसायनं पिब ॥३१॥

Idaṁ śarīraṁ pariṇāmapeśalaṁ
Patatyavaśyaṁ ślathasandhijarjaraṁ
Kimouṣadhaiḥ kliśyasi mūdha ! durmate !
Nirāmayaṁ Kṛṣṇa rasāyanaṁ piba

Ye, my stupid mind, in ignorance steeped !
Why torment with earthly drugs this body frail,
Sure to disintegrate and some day fall ?
Drink instead the nectar that flows as you spell
The holy name, 'Kṛṣṇa', the sovereign remedy indeed.

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(Hey) durmate ! mūḍha ! pariṇāma peśalaṁ ślatha-sandhi-jarjaraṁ idaṁ śarīraṁ avaśyaṁ patati ouṣadhaiḥ kiṁ kliśyasi ? nirāmayaṁ Kṛṣṇa rasāyanaṁ piba.

(Hey) *durmate ! mūdha !*—you stupid (tongue), steeped in ignorance !

pariṇāma peśalaṁ—liable to fail at the crucial moment, that is, while practising the discipline of ' Bhakti ', the path of loving devotion to God. (could also mean ' worn-out due to age ')

ślatha-sandhi-jarjaraṁ—in a state of debilitation, with loosened reflexes and shaky limbs,

idaṁ śarīraṁ—this body

avaśyaṁ patati—is bound to drop down (fall off)

ouṣadhaiḥ kim kliśyasi—why torment it (make it suffer) with many an earthly drug ?

Nirāmayaṁ—flawless (unfailing recipe)

Kṛṣṇa rasāyanaṁ—the mixture (potion), called 'Kṛṣṇa'

piba—drink

The poet's tongue, when asked by him to utter the Lord's name, told him that it would, first of all, pick up the requisite strength to utter the holy name through the drugs normally taken by the people around for keeping the body fit. Thereupon the poet rebukes the tongue for thinking in terms of pampering the perishable body, frail and fleeting, which goes out of commission at the crucial moment when its stability is very much needed. This will be little better than decorating the tender white core of the plantain trunk, which will decay in a day or two, with gold rims. Actually, the poet deplores the frantic attempts of the worldly men to prop up the perishable body instead of curing the Soul within by drinking deep the 'Kṛṣṇa rasāyanaṁ' (chanting the holy name, Kṛṣṇa), the flawless tonic, the mixture, *par excellence*, the unfailing recipe, the sovereign remedy for all our ills and evils.

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The Mantra, par excellence

(Slokas 18 and 23)

हे मर्त्याः परमं हितं शृणुत वो वक्ष्यामि संक्षेपतः
संसारार्णवमापदूर्मिबहुलं सम्यक् प्रविश्य स्थिताः ।
नानाज्ञानमपास्य चेतसि नमो नारायणायेत्यमुं
मन्त्रं सप्रणवं प्रणामसहितं प्रावर्तयध्वं मुहुः ॥ १८ ॥

Hey martyāh ! paramaṁ hitaṁ śṛṇuta vo vakṣyāmi
saṁkṣepataḥ
Saṁsārārṇavamāpadūrmibahulaṁ saṁyakpraviśya
sthitāḥ
Nānājñānamapāsya cetasi Namo Nārāyaṇāyetyamuṁ
Mantraṁ saprāṇavaṁ praṇāmasahitaṁ prāvarta-
yadhvaṁ muhuḥ

Listen, ye mortals, sunk deep in *saṁsāra,*
the ocean turbulent,
Surging with perils many, to my counsel,
brief and yet the best ;
Shedding your ignorance of sorts, chant you shall,
again and again,
'Namo Nārāyaṇāya[1]', the mantra (hymn of prayer),
most potent,
By praṇava (Om[2]) preceded, in humble genuflection
[1. constitutes the great Tirumantra 2. preceded by]

Āpadūrmibahulaṁ saṁsārārṇavaṁ samyakpraviśyasthitaḥ hey martyāḥ vaḥ paramaṁ hitaṁ saṁkṣepataḥ vakṣyāmi śṛṇuta, nānājñānaṁ apāsya cetasi sapraṇavaṁ Namo Nārāyaṇāya iti amuṁ mantraṁ praṇāmasahitaṁ muhuḥ prāvartayadhvaṁ

āpadūrmi bahulaṁ — full of waves (the perils and hazards)

saṁsāra arṇavaṁ — the ocean of *saṁsāra* (earthly bondage)

*

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samyak—well inside, *praviśya sthitāḥ*—who remain sunk
hey martyāḥ—o, mortals, *vaḥ*—to you
paramaṁ hitaṁ—the highest good, *samkṣepataḥ*—briefly,
(ahaṁ) *vakṣyāmi*—(I) shall tell; *śruṇuta*—listen,
nānājñānaṁ—ignorance of sorts (nānājñānaṁ—miscellaneous knowledge, of no use on the spiritual plane)
apāsya—setting aside, *cetasi*—from the mind,
Namo Nārāyaṇāya iti amuṁ mantraṁ—the holy mantra, '*Namo Nārāyaṇāya*'
sapraṇavaṁ—along with '*Aum*' (Om), known as '*praṇava*',
praṇāma sahitaṁ—reverently prostrating (in humble genuflexion)
muhuḥ—often, *prāvartayadhvaṁ*—do chant

In ślokas 17, 24 and 31, the poet disclosed the wonder-drug, the positive cure for all the ills and evils, mankind is heir to. In this śloka, the poet comes up with yet another recipe, not different but inter-related, namely, uttering the great 'Tirumantra'—*Aum Namo Nārāyaṇaya*, very often so as to preclude the relapse of the erstwhile malady. Again, in śloka 23, the poet reveals 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa' mantra, the great Redeemer. Hence, that śloka is taken immediately after this, as a follow-up of the same theme.

Srikrsna Mantra—the great Redeemer

शत्रुच्छेदैकमन्त्रं सकलमुपनिषद्वाक्यसंपूज्यमन्त्रं
संसारोत्तारमन्त्रं समुपचिततमस्सङ्घनिर्याणमन्त्रम् ।
सर्वैश्वर्यैकमन्त्रं व्यसनभुजग सन्दष्ट सन्त्राणमन्त्रं
जिह्वे श्रीकृष्णमन्त्रं जपजप सततं जन्मसाफल्यमन्त्रम् ॥ २३ ॥

Śatrucchedaikamantraṁ sakalamupaniṣadvākya
saṁpūjyamantraṁ
Saṁsārottāramantraṁ samupacitatamassaṅgha-
niryāṇamantraṁ

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Sarvaiśvaryaikamantraṁ vyasanabhujaga sandaṣṭa
santrāṇamantraṁ
Jihve ! Śrīkṛṣṇamantraṁ japajapa satataṁ
janmasāphalyamantraṁ

Chant, ever and anon, my tongue ! the name
'Śrīkṛṣṇa', the spell great
That does our enemies quell, the Mantra
wherein happily blend
The halo'd Vedic texts, the Mantra that does
from *saṁsāra* liberate,
The Mantra that does age-long accumulation
of sins dispel,
The Mantra that yields wealth immense,
that cures the bitter bite
Of that serpent, the human miseries, the
Mantra that redeems us all
And grinds to a halt birth and death,
the cycle dreadful.

(Hey) jihve ! Śatruccheda eka mantraṁ, sakalaṁ upaniṣad vākya saṁpūjya mantraṁ, saṁsāra uttāra mantraṁ, samupacita tamassaṅgha niryāṇa mantraṁ, sarva aiśvaryaika mantraṁ, vyasana bhujaga sandaṣṭa santrāṇa mantraṁ, janma sāphalya mantraṁ, Śrīkṛṣṇa mantraṁ satataṁ japajapa

Hey jihve !—you, my tongue !

śatruccheda eka mantraṁ—the one (prime) mantra (spell) that can destroy all the enemies,

sakalaṁ upaniṣad vākya saṁpūjya mantraṁ—the mantra, lauded by the haloed Vedic texts, one and all,

samsāra uttāra mantraṁ—the mantra that lifts one up, from the mire of *saṁsāra*,

samupacita-tamassaṅgha niryāṇa mantraṁ — the mantra that cuts out the age-long accumulation of sins, rooted in dark nescience (ignorance),

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sarva aiśvaryaika mantraṁ—the mantra that yields all-round opulence,

Vyasana bhujaga sandaṣṭa santrāṇa mantraṁ—the mantra that cures the poisonous sting of the serpent, figuaratively denoting the human miseries of sorts,

janma sāphalya mantraṁ—the mantra that redeems one from this hellish existence, perpetuated by a succession of births (janmās), by cutting out the cyclic operation of birth, death and rebirth,

Śrīkṛṣṇa mantraṁ—'Śrīkṛṣṇa', that holy name is itself this mantra,

satataṁ—always

japa japa—Go on repeating [a mantra (spell), when uttered continually, that is repeatedly becomes the japa of that mantra]

In this śloka, the poet hits upon the omnibus (all-in-one) recipe, namely, spelling out the name 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa', the great Mantra (spell) of the highest potency, the destroyer of miseries of all kinds and the bestower of a plethora of benefits, the most outstanding of the latter being emancipation of the chanters from earthly bondage, rooted in age-long sins (the product of dense ignorance gathering mass down the ages) and the eternal enjoyment of the infinite bliss flowing from the Supreme Lord in His transcendant abode, the inexhaustible fountain of infinite joy.

Hailing the unlimited glory of the Supreme Lord beside whom all else pale into insignificance

पृथ्वी रेणुरणुः पयांसि कणिकाः फल्गुस्फुलिङ्गोऽनलः
तेजो निःश्वसनं मरुत् तनुतरं रन्ध्रं सुसूक्ष्मं नभः।
क्षुद्रा रुद्रपितामहप्रभृतयः कीटास्समस्तास्सुराः
दृष्टे यत्र स तावको विजयते भूमावधूतावधिः ॥ १९ ॥

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Pṛthvī reṇuraṇuḥ payāṁsi kaṇikāḥ phalgusphulingo analaḥ
Tejo niḥśvasanaṁ marut tanutaraṁ randhraṁ
susūkṣmaṁ nabhaḥ
Ksudrā Rudrapitāmaha prabhṛtayaḥ kīṭāssamastassurāḥ
Dṛṣte yatra sa tāvako vijayate bhūmāvadhūtāvadhiḥ

Thou art all-conquering and unlimited is Thy glory;
Seen beside Thee the earth to subtle bits dumdles
And the mighty, oceanic waters to tiny spray,
The blazing fire is nothing but spark gentle
And the wind, a feeble breath; seem the sky
a little hole
And the Devas, Brahmā, Rudrā and them all
Hardly any more than insects small.

Yatra dṛṣṭe prithvī aṇuḥ reṇuḥ payāṁsi kaṇikāḥ analaḥ tejaḥ phalguḥ sphulingaḥ marut tanutaraṁ niśvasanaṁ nabhaḥ susūkṣmaṁ randhraṁ Rudra Pitāmaha prabhṛtayaḥ samastāḥ surāḥ kiṭāḥ saḥ tāvakaḥ avadhūta avadhiḥ bhūmā vijayate

yatra dṛṣṭe—beside whom when seen,
pṛthvi—the Earth, *aṇuḥ*—minute (subtle),
reṇuḥ—particles, *payāmsi*—the oceanic waters,
kaṇikāḥ—tiny drops (sprays),
analaḥ tejaḥ—fire, the manifestation of the element, 'tejas',
phalguḥ sphulingaḥ—gentle (insignificant) spark,
marut—wind (vāyu), *tanutaraṁ*—(like) feeble
niśvasanaṁ—breath, *nabhaḥ*—sky (space)
susūkṣmaṁ randhraṁ—(like) tiny hole (aperture)
Rudra Pitāmaha prabhṛutayaḥ—Rudra, Brahma and others of that exalted order,
samastāḥ surāḥ—the devas, in their entirety,
kṣudrāḥ kīṭāḥ—(look like) petty insects (in comparison)

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saḥ—that, *tāvakaḥ avadhūtavadhiḥ bhūmā*—your unlimited (transcending all limits) glory,

vijayate—is all-conquering

The poet brings into clear focus the Vedic truth that Lord Nārāyaṇa also known as Viṣṇu and Vāsudeva, is the Supreme Lord, head and shoulders above all* else, who, beside Him, pale into insignificance, dwindling down to the bottom-most depths of diminution and thus bear no comparison with Him.

* [The five elements, Devas and all]

Contemplation of Your lotus feet alone can sustain our lives

बद्धेनाञ्जलिना नतेन शिरसा गात्रैस्सरोमोद्गमैः
कण्ठेन स्वरगद्गदेन नयने नोद्गीर्ण बाष्पाम्बुना।
नित्यं त्वच्चरणारविन्दयुगळध्यानामृतास्वादिनां
अस्माकं सरसीरुहाक्ष सततं संपद्यतां जीवितम् ॥ २० ॥

Baddhenāñjalinā natena śirasā gātraissaromodgamaiḥ
Kaṇṭhena svaragadgadena nayane nodgīrṇa bāṣpāmbunā
Nityaṁ tvaccaraṇāravindayugala dhyānāmṛtāsvādināṁ
Asmākaṁ Sarasīruhākṣa ! satataṁ saṁpadyatāṁ jīvitam

O, lotus-eyed Lord ! with palms in prayer joined,
Head bowed down, hair standing on end,
Voice choked, eyes shedding joyous tears in torrents,
We drink deep the ambrosia of contemplation
Of your lotus feet; pray let us hold on
To this, our sustenance, ever and anon

Sarasīruhākṣa ! baddhena añjalinā natena śirasā saroma utgamaiḥ gātraiḥ svaragadgadena kaṇṭhena udgīrṇa bāṣpāmbunā nayanena nityaṁ tvatcaraṇa aravinda yugala dhyāna amṛta āsvadināṁ asmākaṁ jivitaṁ satataṁ sampadyatām

Sarasīruhākṣa !—O, lotus-eyed Lord !

baddhena añjalinā—with palms joined, in salutation,

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śirasā natena—(also) with head bowed down,
saroma udgatena—(also) hair standing on end (thrilled, with awe and reverence)
gātraih—with quivering limbs
Svaragadgadena—with tremulous (choked) voice
kaṇṭhena—in the throat also
udgīrṇa bāṣpa ambunā—with torrential tears
nayanena—in the eyes also, *nityaṁ*—at all times,
tvat caraṇa aravinda yugala dhyāna amṛta āsvādinām—drinking deep the ambrosia of meditation of your lotus feet,
asmākaṁ—for us,
jīvitaṁ satataṁ saṁpadyatām — may sustenance be achieved and stabilised, at all times.

In ślokas 17 and 18, the poet preached, to the world around, the efficacy of *' Śrī Kṛṣṇa Nāma diviyamrta '* (the grand elixir, the nectarean name of Lord Kṛṣṇa) and the greatness of the eight-lettered 'Tirumantra' *(Aum namo Nārāyanāya)*, the sure solvent for all the ills and evils, mankind is prone to. But his advice fell on deaf ears. The worldlings were woefully unresponsive and remained earth-bound and sense-buried, as ever. And yet, in his boundless compassion for the suffering humanity, the poet prays to the Lord, in this śloka, not only for himself but for mankind, as a whole, that such a robust faith in the Lord's lovely pair of feet, as the sole Refuge, be inculcated in one and all. It deserves to be specially noted that universal concern and compassion for fellow-beings, cutting across regional, linguistic and communal barriers, deeply animated the great Ālvār saints and the great Āchāryas, as reflected in the hymns of the former and the stotra literature, bequeathed by the latter.

Thou art my sole Refuge, O Lord !

हे गोपालक हे कृपाजलनिधे हे सिन्धुकन्यापते
हे कंसान्तक हे गजेन्द्र करुणापारीण हे माधव ।

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हे रामानुज हे जगत्रयगुरो हे पुण्डरीकाक्ष मां
हे गोपीजननाथ पालय परं जानामि न त्वां विना ॥ २१ ॥

Hey Gopālaka ! hey Kṛpājalanidhe ! hey Sindhu-
kanyāpate !
Hey Kaṁsāntaka ! hey Gajendra karuṇāpāriṇa !
hey Mādhava !
Hey Rāmānuja ! hey Jagatrayaguro ! hey Puṇḍarīkākṣa !
māṁ
Hey Gopījananātha ! pālaya paraṁ jāṇāmi na tvāṁ vinā

O, Divine Cowherd ! O, Sea of compassion !
O, Consort of Lakṣmi, the bride from the ocean !
O, Slayer of Kaṁsa ! O, Gajendrā's[1] deliverer !
O, Mādhava ! scion of Balarāma ! O, Preceptor
Of all the three worlds ! O, lotus-eyed ! O, Protector
Of the Gopis[2] ! Thou art my deliverer ;
Other than Thee I know of no saviour

1. The grace (karuṇa), referred to here, is the deliverance of Gajendra, the pious elephant, engaged in a titanic struggle with a crocodile, from the vicious jaws of the latter.

2. The damsels of Vrindavan, of matchless devotion to Śrīkṛṣṇa whose glorious company they had the great, good fortune to enjoy, at close quarters.

Hey Gopālaka ! hey Kṛpājalanidhe ! hey Sindhukanyāpate ! hey Kaṁsāntaka ! hey Gajendra karuṇāpāriṇa ! hey Mādhava ! hey Rāmānuja ! hey Jagatrayaguro ! hey Puṇḍarīkākṣa ! hey Gopijananātha ! māṁ pālaya tvaṁ vinā paraṁ na jānāmi

Hey Gopālaka—O, Divine cow-herd !

hey Kṛpājalanidhe !—O, ocean of compassion !

hey Sindhu kanyāpate—O, consort of Lakṣmi, the ocean-born (She emerged from the 'Milk-ocean' when it was churned)

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hey Kaṁsāntaka !—O, slayer of (the evil-minded) Kaṁsa !

hey Gajendra karuṇāpāriṇa—O, Gajendra's deliverer, of grace galore !

hey Mādhava—O, Mādhava (Lord Viṣṇu) on whose winsome chest is inseparably poised the Divine Mother, Śrī Mahālakṣmi, who emerged from the depths of the 'Milk-ocean', during that epoch-making churning of the ocean.

hey Ramānuja !—O, Younger brother of Balarāma !

hey Jagatraya Guro—O, Universal Teacher !

hey Puṇḍarīkākṣa !—O, lotus-eyed !

hey Gopijananātha !—O, Liege-Lord of the shepherdesses !

māṁ—me (this vassal), *pālaya*—please salve !

tvāṁ vina—other than you, *paraṁ*—any one else,

na jānāmi—(I) know not

O, Supreme Lord ! You have delivered Your devotees from their enemies and effectively destroyed all those enemies. May You, likewise, cut out all my enemies, the impediments for my attaining you, as I know of no saviour other than You, the omnipotent. I would never be able to beat them down, on my own and attain You. Further, I am wholly Yours *(tavāsmi)* and it behoves You, as the sole Proprietor to salvage me Your property from the wreckage of *Saṁsāra* (earthly bondage)

The multi-purpose gem

भक्तापायभुजङ्गगारुडमणिः त्रैलोक्यरक्षामणिः
गोपीलोचनचातकाम्बुदमणिः सौन्दर्यमुद्रामणिः ।
यः कान्तामणिरुक्मिणीघनकुचद्वन्द्वैकभूषामणिः
श्रेयो देवशिखामणिर्दिशतु नो गोपालचूडामणिः ॥ २२ ॥

Bhaktāpāyabhujaṅga gāruḍamaṇiḥ trailokyarakṣāmaniḥ
Gopīlocanacātakambudamaṇiḥ saundaryamudrāmaṇiḥ

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Yaḥ Kāntāmaṇi Rukmiṇī ghanakuca dvandvaika bhūṣā-
maṇiḥ
Śreyo Devaśikhāmaṇirdiśatu no Gopālacūḍāmaṇiḥ

May Kṛṣṇa, the *crown-jewel* of shepherd clan,
the *Gem* that quells
Like *Gāruḍamaṇi, the snake of hazards which
the devout be fall,
The *Gem* that succours the worlds three,
the *Gem* that looms
In Gopi's eyes like unto watery clouds for
Cātaka birds, the *Gem*
That does beauty symbolise, the *Gem* that
decorates the breast buxom
Of Rukmiṇī, *Gem* among women, the *Gem*
lustrous in celestial's crown,
Deign to bestow on us felicity of every kind.

[*the precious stone which kills serpents]

Bhaktāpāyabhujaṅga gāruḍamaṇiḥ trilokya rakṣāmaṇiḥ Gopī-locana cātaka ambudamaṇiḥ soundarya mudrāmaṇiḥ Kāntāmaṇī Rukmiṇī ghanakuca dvandvaika bhūṣāmaṇiḥ yaḥ Devaśikhāmaṇiḥ Gopālacūḍāmaṇiḥ naḥ śreyaḥ diśatu.

Bhaktāpāya bhujaṅga gāruḍamaṇiḥ—He, who wards off the perils besetting His devotees like the Gāruḍa-maṇi, the precious stone which kills serpents,

trailokya rakṣāmaṇiḥ—The Gem that succours all the three worlds,

Gopīlocana cātakāmbudamaṇiḥ—The Gem that looms in the eyes of the shepherd damsels like the water-laden clouds, longed for, by the cātaka birds, (these birds quench their thirst by drinking directly the rain-drops from above),

saundarya mudrāmaṇiḥ — The Gem that symbolises (adorns) beauty,

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Kāntāmaṇi Rukmiṇī ghanakuca dvandvaika bhūṣāmaṇiḥ—The gem that decorates the pair of buxom breasts of Rukmiṇī, the gem of a woman (gem among women),

yaḥ (saḥ)—who that one is,

Devaśikhāmaṇiḥ —That crown-jewel of the celestials or the gem that imparts lustre to the crown of the celestials,

naḥ—for us, *śreyāḥ*—felicity, *diśatu*—may deign to bestow.

The Supreme Lord whose creed is to redeem and resurrect the devout, came down to holy Madhura (spelt as Mathura, the holy city in Uttar Pradesh) from His abode in the Milk-ocean and endeared Himself to the devout damsels in nearly Vrindâvan. He loomed large in the eyes of those damsels (Gopīs) of the shepherd clan and was a source of endless delight for them. He took on an exquisitely charming form, highly delectable to Rukmini, His consort, herself being a gem among women. May that Supreme Lord deign to bestow on us all, every kind of felicity including the eternal bliss in heaven. Thus prays the poet in this śloka.

Utter futility of Vedic chantings, rites and rituals, bereft of loving devotion unto the Lord's lotus feet

आम्नायाभ्यसनान्यरण्यरुदितं देवव्रतान्यन्वहं
मेदश्छेदफलानि पूर्तविधयः सर्वेहुतं भस्मनि ।
तीर्थानामवगाहनानि च गजस्नानं विना यत्पद-
द्वन्द्वाम्भोरुहसंस्मृती विजयते देवस्य नारायणः ॥ २५ ॥

Āmnāyābhyasanānyaraṇyaruditaṁ devavratānyanvahaṁ
Medaśchedaphalani pūrtavidhayaḥ sarve hutaṁ bhasmani
Tīrthānāmavagāhanāni ca gajasnānaṁ vinā yatpada
Dvandvāmbhoruha saṁsmṛtī vijayate devasya Nārāyaṇaḥ

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Supreme is Nārāyaṇa, the all-conquering Lord ;
lack of meditation
On His lotus pair of feet will, the Vedic
chantings, render
But a cry in wilderness, acts of charity, a mere
oblation
In ash, the daily rituals, an exercise futile to wear
The body down and bathing in sacred waters,
the dip elephantine

Yatpadadvandvāmbhoruhasaṁsmṛti vinā āmnāya abhyasanāni araṇyaruditaṁ anvahaṁ Veda vratāni medaśchedaphalāni pūrta vidhayaḥ sarve bhasmanihutaṁ tīrthānām avagāhanāṇica gajasnānaṁ saḥ Nārāyaṇa Devaḥ vijayate

yat pada dvandva ambhoruha saṁsmṛti vinā—bereft of (loving) meditation on whose pair of lotus feet,

āmnāya abhyasanāni—learning the Vedas,

araṇyaruditaṁ—(is but a) cry in the wilderness,

anvahaṁ vedavratāni—performance of the daily Vedic rites and rituals,

medaścheda phalāni—(nothing more than) an exercise is sweating the body,

pūrtavidhyaḥ—acts of charity like digging wells, tanks etc.,

sarve bhasmani hutaṁ—all these will turn out to be no more than the futile oblations in mere ash (where the fire is extinct),

tirthānāṁ avagāhanānica gajasnānaṁ—bathing in sacred waters no better than elephants taking dips,

saḥ Nārāyaṇaḥ devaḥ vijayate—that God, Nārāyaṇa is at conquering, ever victorious

Without the basic ingredient, namely, meditation on the lovely pair of feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān, Who is none other than Lord Nārāyaṇa, come down to Earth, *(Hari caraṇa*

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smaraṇa), learning and chanting the Vedas, performance of rigorous rituals, the Vedic rites, ostensible acts of charity, bathing in the sacred waters, all over the country and the like will be mere exercises in futility, as good as not done, may, reduced to a mere mockery, as brought out in this śloka.

The efficacy of reciting the holy names of Lord Narayana—a vocal exercise of immense potentiality

(Ślokas 26 and 30)

श्रीमन्नाम प्रोच्य नारायणाख्यं
के न प्रापुर्वाच्छितं पापिनोऽपि ।
हा नः पूर्वं वाक्प्रवृत्ता न तस्मिन्
तेन प्राप्तं गर्भवासादिदुःखम् ॥ २६ ॥

Śrīmannāma procya Nārāyaṇākhyaṁ
Ke na prāpurvañchitaṁ papino api
Hā ! naḥ pūrvaṁ vākpravṛtta na tasmin
Tena prāptaṁ garbhavāsādi duḥkhaṁ

Which person, however sinful, failed to secure his ends
By uttering '*Śrīmannārāyaṇa*', of vast wealth potential ?
Alas ! failure of one's tongue to recite it earlier lands
One inside the mother's womb and all the miseries which then befall

Śrimat Nārāyaṇākhyaṁ nāma procya pāpino api ke vañchitaṁ na prāpuḥ hā naḥ pūrvaṁ tasmin vākpravṛtta tena garbhavāsādi duḥkhaṁ prāptaṁ

Śrīmat Nārāyaṇakhyaṁ nāma procya—By uttering the name 'Nārāyaṇa', in conjunction with 'Śri, the Goddess of affluence (indicative of the vast wealth potential),

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pāpino api—even if they be sinners, *ke*—who
vañchitaṁ—(their) desires, *na prāpuḥ*—did not secure
hā—alas! *naḥ*—for us, *tasmin*—that (such a name)
vāk na pravṛtta—the tongue did not (failed to) articulate,
tena—for that reason, *garbhavāsādi duḥkhaṁ*—miseries like incarnation in the mother's womb etc.
prāptam—have resulted (are experienced by us)

In the immediately preceding śloka (25) the poet pointed out that the Vedic rites and rituals, put through without meditating on the lotus feet of Lord Nārāyaṇa, are absolutely worthless. The question that naturally follows is how indeed love for the Lord's lotus feet could be generated in the practicant. Here then is the answer namely, utterance of the holy name, 'Nārāyaṇa', of boundless potentiality. Had we but uttered that holy name in our previous birth we could have jolly well cut short our cycle of births. Having failed to do so, we have perpetuated that dreadful cycle, getting back again inside that cramped locker, the mother's womb and here we are, telling our never-ending tale of woes. Either we would not have been aware of this unfailing recipe or the tongue would have refrained from spelling out the holy name. Shall we not wake up, at least now, and put a stop to future miseries by uttering the holy name, '*Śrīmannārāyaṇā*', sweet and potent? It is indeed a marvel of marvels, the sanctifying effect of the holy name which does not even depend upon the devotee's subjective attitude or understanding. Just a casual utterance of the Lord's name, which, in itself, is the very incarnation of the Lord in 'sound form' *(Śabdha Brahmaṁ)* does the job. In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam it has been asserted, as follows:

"If a person cries out, in a mood of helplessness, 'O, Hari!', be it when falling from a height or when slipping down or when being cut up, bitten, burnt or beaten, he/she does not go to hell, having been absolved of all the sins which would have, otherwise, invited drastic punishments in hell."

The names of the Lord, when uttered by some one, hardly conscious of their potentialities, destroy his/her sins in the same

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way as fire consumes fuel, blisters an innocent babe coming in contact with it, not knowing that it is fire or a potent drug manifests its inherent curative property even when taken casually, unaware of its potency and efficiency.

तत्वं ब्रुवाणानि परं परस्मात्
मधु क्षरन्तीव सतां फलानि ।
प्रावर्त्तय प्राञ्जलिरस्मि जिह्वे
नामानि नारायण गोचराणि ॥ ३० ॥

Tatvaṁ bruvāṇāni paraṁ parasmāt
Madhu kṣarantīva satāṁ phalāni
Prāvarttaya prāñjalirasmi jihve !
Nāmāni Nārāyaṇa gocarāṇi

You, my tongue, I do with joined palms beseech
To utter the names which the glory of Nārāyaṇa bespeak
And reveal the truth ultimate, higher than all else,
Wherein revel the devout like unto fruits with honey profuse

(Hey) jihve ! prāñjaliḥ asmi parasmāt paraṁ tatvaṁ bruvāṇāni satāṁ madhu kṣaranti phalānīva Nārāyaṇa gocaraṇī nāmāni prāvarttaya.

Hey jihve !—O, my tongue !
prāñjaliḥ—with joined palms, *asmi*—I am
parasmāt paraṁ tatvaṁ—the truth ultimate, loftier than the lofty,
bruvāṇāni—(that which) spells out,
madhu—honey, *kṣaranti*—shedding copiously,
phalānīva—like fruits,
Nārāyaṇa gocarāṇi—pertaining to Lord Nārāyaṇa,
Namāni prāvarttaya—recite (keep reciting) continually the holy names.

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All fruits are not juicy and even those fruits which are juicy are not, all of them, tasty like honey. Well, even those fruits, which are juicy and taste like honey, cannot be had at all times. They make their appearance only during the appropriate seasons. On the other hand, the holy names pertaining to Lord Nārāyaṇa are all juicy, shedding honey in profusion, all the time. The poet, therefore, exhorts his tongue which has already tasted the honey in question, to keep reciting the holy names for his spiritual redemption and sustenance.

O, Lord ! let me be the very last in the chain of Your devotees—I invoke no other blessing from Thee

मज्जन्मनः फलमिदं मधुकैटभारे
मत्प्रार्थनीयमदनुग्रह एष एव ।
त्वद्भृत्यभृत्यपरिचारक भृत्यभृत्य
भृत्यस्य भृत्य इति मां स्मर लोकनाथ ॥ २७ ॥

Majjanmanaḥ phalamidaṁ Madhu Kaiṭabhāre
Matprārthanīyamadanugraha eṣa eva
Tvadbhṛtyabhṛtya paricāraka bhṛtya bhṛtya
Bhṛtyasya bhṛtya iti māṁ smara Lokanātha !

May Thou, O, slayer of Madhu Kaiṭabha, bless me
That I be the vassal of the vassals of your vassals,
Last in the chain, this is indeed my life's goal;
O, Universal Lord ! 'tis just this I invoke from Thee.

Madhukaiṭabhāre ! majjanmanaḥ phalaṁ idaṁ, matprārthanīya madanugraha eṣa eva, Lokanātha ! tvadbhṛtya-bhṛtya-paricāraka bhṛtya bhṛtya bhṛtyasya bhṛtyaḥ iti māṁ smara.

Madhukaiṭabhāre !—O, slayer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, the demons who had stolen the Vedas from the four-faced Brahma,

majjanmanaḥ phalaṁ idaṁ—The *summum bonum*, the chief good, the goal of my life is just this,

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matprārthanīya madanugraha—(and so) what is prayed for by me and what You have to grant me by shedding Your benign grace,

eṣa eva—(is) only this

Lokanātha !—O, Lord of the (entire) Universe !

tvat-bhṛtya bhṛtya paricāraka bhṛtya bhṛtya bhṛtyasya—unto the vassal of your vassals' vassals, their vassals' vassals,

bhṛtyaḥ iti—as their vassal (and so on, the last in the chain of your devotees)

mām smara—may you please think of me.

The full impact of devotion to the Lord is experienced only when the bottom-most in the chain of His devotees is as heartily served as the Lord Himself is served. Here then is the natural yearning of the true devotee whose love for the Lord logically extends to all His devotees. The poet's prayer that he should be looked upon by Him as the very last in the chain of His devotees stems from such a deep yearning, wiping out the last shred of egotism in him. See also Tiruvāymoli (III-7–10 and VIII-10–9). Indeed, this is the quintessence of 'Namaḥ' the middle part of 'Tirumaṅtra'.

Alas ! are we to be dubbed dumb and base ?

नाथे नः पुरुषोत्तमे त्रिजगतामेकाधिपे चेतसा
सेव्ये स्वस्य पदस्य दातरि सुरे नारायणे तिष्ठति ।
यं कञ्चित्पुरुषाधमं कतिपयग्रामेशमल्पार्थदं
सेवायै मृगयामहे नरमहो मूका वराका वयम् ॥ २८ ॥

Nāthe naḥ Puruṣottame trjagatāmekādhipe cetasā
Sevye svasya padasya dātari sure Nārāyaṇe tiṣṭhati
Yam kiñcitpuruṣādhamaṁ katipaya grāmeśamalpārthadaṁ
Sevāyai mṛgayāmahe naramaho mūkā varākā vayaṁ

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My Lord! Supreme among all persons Thou art,
The monarch sole of the worlds three and in every heart
Fit to be adored, the Deva, Nārāyaṇa who does pervade
All over and grants us the land eternal, Thine abode
And yet, alas! we worldlings, in quest of service,
run around
After non-descripts with meagre holdings and
very little to give;
To be dubbed dumb and base we surely deserve!

Naḥ Nāthe Puruṣottame trijagatāṁ ekādhipe cetasā sevye svasya padasya dātari sure Nārāyaṇe tiṣṭhati ॥ Katipayagrāmeśaṁ alpārthadaṁ yaṁ kañcit puruṣādhamaṁ naraṁ sevāyai mṛgayāmahe aho vayaṁ mūkāḥ varākāḥ.

Naḥ Nāthe—Our Lord

Puruṣottame—The best among 'Puruṣās', (individual souls). The suffix in the superlative degree denotes the sublimity of the qualities of Paramātma *vis-a-vis* all the rest including the 'Nityasūris' (Ever-free, eternal angels), 'Muktās' (released souls) 'Puruṣa', derived from 'puru-sanoti', means the 'Giver'. The Puruṣottama is the Giver, *par excellence*, the 'Giver' beyond comparison, there being no gift beyond His capacity.

Trijagatāṁ ekādhipe—The sovereign master, the sole monarch of all the worlds,

cetasā sevye—eminently fit to be adored and served, inducing the longing therefor in one's mind.

Svasya padasya dātari — the granter of entry into His transcendental abode, the Eternal Lord, whence there is no returning. (It is His sole prerogative)

Sure Nārāyaṇe—The Deva (Devādi Deva), Nārāyaṇa,

tiṣṭhati—remains stationed in all things and beings,

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all over (omni-present) and is therefore readily available to the seekers (and yet)

vayaṁ mūkāḥ varākāḥ—We, who are dumb and base,

katipayagrāmeśaṁ—a petty proprietor (zamindar) of a few villages,

alpārthadaṁ—and a poor paymaster, at that,

yaṁkañcit—someone (non descript)

puruṣādhamaṁ—a base person (the very antithesis of Puruṣottama) a mean fellow,

naraṁ sevāyai—for serving such a (depraved) person,

mṛgayāmahe—we hang on (and run after him)

aho !—alas ! what a pity !

The poet who had earlier prayed to the Lord to kindle in him God-love and stabilise it, now indulges in a little bit of retrospection, painfully recalling how in the days gone by, he had strayed away from the Lord, the greatest of all donors, doling out a plethora of benefits (sarva lābhāya Keśavaḥ) and run after mean individuals in quest of paltry, material benefits. He not only feels vexed over his past lapses but also deplores the ignoble pursuits of the men around, overlooking rather woefully, forgetful of their essential nature and the great glory of the bounteous Creator and their inter-relationship. The Śāstras proclaim that the Supreme Lord (Puruṣottama) alone is the granter of all facilities and destroyer of all evils. But for the influx of the requisite power from the Supreme Lord, which maintains the minor deities in their respective positions of authority, the minor deites, by themselves, would be incapable of extending favours to their votaries and vouchsafing their protection.

Hands off, Mr. Cupid !

मदन परिहर स्थितिं मदीये
मनसि मुकुन्दपदारविन्दधाम्नि ।
हरनयन कृशानुना कृशोसि
स्मरसि न चक्रपराक्रमं मुरारेः ॥ २९ ॥

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Madana parihara sthitiṁ madīye
Manasi Mukundapadāravinda dhāmni
Haranayana Kṛśanunā kṛśosi
Smarasi na cakraparākramaṁ Murāreḥ

You Madana![1] do leave for good my mind,
Now the abode of the lotus feet of Mukunda;
The fire from Hara's[2] eye pulled your body down,
Even so, don't you Murāri's[3] discus powerful reckon?

1. *Madana* is Manmatha, the angel who is believed to incite sexual romance.
2. *Hara* is Rudra. Once when Madana attempted to disturb Rudra's penance by aiming at the latter amorous shafts, the latter became furious and reduced the former to ashes; thereafter Madana was bodiless (anaṅga).
3. *Murāri*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of the demon, Mura

(Hey) Madana! Mukunda padāravinda dhāmni madīye manasi sthitiṁ parihara, Haranayana Kṛśānunā kṛśosi Murāreḥ cakraparākramaṁ na smarasi?

Hey Madana!—O, Manmatha!
Mukunda padāravinda dhāmni—In the abode (temple) of the lotus feet of Mukunda,
madīye manasi—my mind (is)
parihara sthitim—give up (your) stay (residence)
Haranayana Kṛśānunā—by the fire in Rudra's (forehead) eye
kṛśaḥ—devoid of body, *asi*—(you) have become
Murāreḥ—of Murāri (Mukunda), the slayer of the demon, Mura,
cakraparākramāṁ—the (special) prowess of the discus,
na smarasi—don't you remember (contemplate and dread)?

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Here is the poet's stern warning to Cupid (Manmatha) to clear out of the former's mind, now the citadel of Lord Mukunda. How could light and darkness co-exist and occupy the same niche? How could God and sensuality, again the very antithesis of the former, be in joint occupation of the poet's mind? No doubt, Manmatha had earlier worked havoc on the poet's mind, ensnaring him and diverting him, farther and farther away from God. But now, the milieu has undergone a thorough change, the Lord having shed His grace on the poet and converted his erstwhile unruly mind into His abode. And hence, the 'quit notice' issued by the poet, which compels instant compliance by Manmatha, unless it be that he, already burnt down by Rudra's fiery eye and rendered bodyless, is so impudent as not to reckon with the mightier prowess of Mukunda's discus. 'Once bitten, twice shy' and so, Madana is expected to avoid getting into trouble once again and that too, something far more disastrous. The present warning is the outcome of the poet reviewing in retrospect, what exactly had been plaguing him earlier impending his rapport with Mukunda, which he was currently enjoying. c.f. Periyālvār Tirumozhi V-2 wherein the Ālvār issued similar 'Quit notice' to the ills and evils (lock, stock and barrel), which had been plaguing his body, which has since become the citadel of God.

As I know Thee, my Lord!

दारा वाराकारवरसुता ते तनूजो विरिञ्चः
स्तोता वेदस्तव सुरगणो भृत्यवर्गः प्रसादः ।
मुक्तिर्माया जगदविकलं तावकी देवकी ते
माता मित्रं बलरिपुसुतस्त्वय्यतोऽन्यन्न जाने ॥ ३२ ॥

Dārā vārākāravarasutā te tanūjo viriñcaḥ
Stotā vedastava suragaṇo bhṛtya vargaḥ prasādaḥ
Muktirmāyā jagadavikalaṁ tāvakī Devakī te
Mātā mitraṁ valaripusutas tvayyato anyannajāne

Lakṣmi, the ocean-born, is Thy Consort,
Brahma, Thy Son, the Vedas laud Thy glory great,

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The Devas render service at Thy feet,
' Tis thro ' Thy grace one does ' Mokṣa '* get,
Māyā is Thy instrument ushering the universe vast,
Devaki is Thy mother and Indra's son, Thy mate,
I know of Thee no more than that.

(*Mokṣa—emancipation from earthly bondage, the dreadful cycle of birth and death.)

(Hey Kṛṣṇa !) te dārāḥ vārākāravarasutā tanūjaḥ viriñcaḥ stotā vedaḥ bhṛtyavargaḥ suraganāḥ prasādaḥ muktiḥ māyā avikalaṁ jagat tāvakī mātā Devakī mitraṁ valaripusataḥ tvayi ataḥ anyat na jāne.

(Hey Kṛṣṇa !) *te*—Your, *dārāḥ*—Consort,
vārākāravara sutā—daughter of the ocean (Milk-ocean),
tanūjaḥ—son, *viriñcaḥ*—Brahma (the four-faced),
stotā—that which lauds You, *Vedaḥ*—the Veda which reveals Your great glory,
Bhṛtyavargaḥ—the bond of servers (vassals),
suraganāḥ—the multitude of Devas,
prasādaḥ—gracious dispensation,
Muktiḥ—Mokṣa, the final emancipation from earthly bondage, the material shackles,
Māyā—Your cosmic power (of wondrous dimensions),
avikalaṁ jagat—(ushers in) the sprawling universe,
tāvaki—Your,
mātā—mother (the one who had propitiated You earlier), *Devakī*—Devakī Devi,
mitraṁ—friend, *Valaripusutaḥ*—Indra's son (Arjuna)
tvayi—of You, *ataḥ*—more than this, *anyat*—anything else, *na jāne*—I do not know.

' Prakṛti ', otherwise known as ' Māyā ' by virtue of its vast potentiality of wondrous dimensions, the primordial Matter, in its unmanifest State is the Lord's instrument for the creation of

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the Universe, vast and varied. By a mere resolve, 'may I become manifold' — *bahusyām prajāyāyet* the Lord ushered in the Kaleidscopic worlds, 'Matter', His instrument undergoing the requisite changes of state, at His sweet will. Goddess Mahālakṣmi is referred to, as the daughter of the 'Milk-ocean', as she emerged from the ocean when it was churned and got herself inseparably poised on the Lord's chest thereafter.

Salve me, O, Krishna, the Supreme saviour of multi-dimensional glory

कृष्णो रक्षतु नो जगत्त्रयगुरुः कृष्णं नमस्याम्यहं
कृष्णेनामरशत्रवो विनिहताः कृष्णाय तुभ्यं नमः ।
कृष्णादेव समुत्थितं जगदिदं कृष्णस्य दासोऽस्म्यहं
कृष्णे तिष्ठति सर्वमेतदखिलं हे कृष्ण रक्षस्व माम् ॥३३॥

Kṛṣṇo rakṣatu no jagatrayaguruḥ *Kṛṣṇaṁ* namasyāmyahaṁ
*Kṛṣṇenā*marāśatravo vinihatāḥ *Kṛṣṇāya* tubhyaṁ namaḥ
*Kṛṣṇād*eva samutthitaṁ jagadidaṁ *Kṛṣṇasya* dāsosmyahaṁ
Kṛṣṇe tiṣṭhati sarvametadakhilaṁ *he Kṛṣṇa* rakṣasva māṁ

May *Kṛṣṇa,* the spiritual teacher of all the worlds,
Protect us; *Him* do I worship, *by Him* were quelled
Deva's foes, *unto You Kṛṣṇa* offer do I obeisance,
From Kṛṣṇa came into being the Universe,
Kṛṣṇa's vassal am I; *in Kṛṣṇa* abide one and all,
O, Kṛṣṇa! deign to solve me, your humble vassal.

Jagattraya Guruḥ Kṛṣṇaḥ naḥ rakṣatu | aham Kṛṣṇam namasyāmi | Kṛṣṇena amaraśatravaḥ vinihatāḥ | Kṛṣṇāya tubhyam namaḥ | idam jagat Kṛṣṇādeva samutthitam aham Kṛṣṇasya dāsaḥ asmi | etat sarvam akhilam Kṛṣṇe tiṣṭhati | he Kṛṣṇa mām rakṣasva.

jagatraya guruḥ–The Universal Teacher, who purveyed through His 'Song Celestal—Gītā' spiritual knowledge, the cream of the Vedic teachings,

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Kṛṣṇaḥ—Kṛṣṇa, *naḥ*—us,
rakṣatu—(May He) protect, *ahaṁ*—I,
Kṛṣṇaṁ namasyāmi—salute Kṛṣṇa,
Kṛṣṇena—By Kṛṣṇa, *amara śatravaḥ*—Deva's foes
vinihatāḥ—were vanquished,
Kṛṣṇāya tubhyaṁ namaḥ—salutation to you, Kṛṣṇa (there is also another reading, 'tubhyaṁ' being substituted by 'tasmai'; meaning 'that'.)
idaṁ jagat—this universe,
Kṛṣṇādeva—from Kṛṣṇa, *samutthitaṁ*—emanated,
ahaṁ Kṛṣṇasya dāsaḥ asmi—Kṛṣṇa's vassal am I,
etat sarvaṁ akhilaṁ—All these (worlds), in their entirety,
Kṛṣṇe tiṣṭhati—rest (abide) in Kṛṣṇa,
He Kṛṣṇa!—O, Kṛṣṇa!, *māṁ (saṁrakṣa) rakṣasva*—protect me.

Recounting the several facets of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glory, the poet also exhibits the awareness of his own essential nature (svarūpa) as the exclusive vassal of the Lord, totally dependent on Him and hence completely resigned to His sweet, spontaneous, redemptive grace. There is, therefore, no question of his indulging in self protection, in any manner, however slight. Hence, the supplication, as above.

It is also noteworthy that, in this śloka, the poet has made admirable use of the word 'Kṛṣṇa' in all the eight cases. [see portions in italics.]

O, all merciful Bhagavan! may you shed your grace and salve this destitute

तत्त्वं प्रसीद भगवन् कुरु मय्यनाथे
विष्णो कृपां परमकारुणिकः किल त्वम् ।
संसारसागरनिमग्नमनन्त दीनं
उद्धर्तुमर्हसि हरे पुरुषोत्तमोऽसि ॥ ३४ ॥

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Tattvaṁ prasīda Bhagavan kuru mayyanāthe
Viṣṇo kṛpāṁ paramakāruṇikaḥ kila tvaṁ
Saṁsārasāgara nimagnamananta dīnaṁ
Uddhartumarhasi Hare Puruṣottamosi

Thou art Viṣṇu, the all-pervading, eternal and merciful,
Full of traits auspicious; deign therefore to shed
On me Thy redemptive grace albeit I have committed
Transgressions many; O, Hari! Who indeed can pull
Me up from the ocean deep of saṁsāra save Thee, the best of all?

(Hey) Bhagavan Viṣṇo tvaṁ anāthe mayi prasīda tvaṁ paramakāruṇikaḥ kila (mayi) kṛpāṁ kuru saṁsāra sāgara nimagnaṁ dīnaṁ uddhartuṁ arhasi Ananta! Hare! Puruṣottamaḥ asi.

Bhagavan!—O, Lord, possessing the six principal traits, namely, omni-science (all-knowing), omni-potence (all-powerful), supreme sovereignty (king of all kings of all the worlds), valour, energy and brilliance each of unlimited dimensions,

Viṣṇo—all-pervading (omni-present),

Tvaṁ—Thou, *anāthe mayi*—upon me (your exclusive vassal), who am without a protector,

prasīda—shed your grace (overlooking my countless transgressions),

Tvaṁ paramakāruṇikaḥ kila—Aren't Thou, the all-merciful?

Mayi kṛpāṁ kuru—unto me extend your grace,

saṁsāra sāgara nimagnaṁ—sunk deep in the ocean of saṁsāra,

dīnaṁ—destitute, poor me, getting tossed up by the terrific waves, the perils and hazards of saṁsāra,

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uddhartuṁ—to lift (me) ashore,

arhasi—(Thou art most) competent, rather the only one who can do that, my sole Refuge,

Ananta !—O, endless (eternal) one !

Hare !—O, Lord Nārāyaṇa ! (Viṣṇu Bhagavān) the great Redeemer who cuts out all our sins and fulfils all our desires,

Puruṣottamaḥ—the best of all, the greatest of all givers, the Donor, *par excellence,*

asi—Thou art.

O, Lord Nārāyaṇa ! Thou art not only Supreme, higher than the highest, the best of all, the greatest of all givers (Puruṣottamaḥ) but also possessed of inumerable auspicious traits, the most outstanding being your redemptive grace, readiness to forgive our truckloads of sins and our imperfections innumerable. For me, sunk deep in the mire of Saṁsāra, is there any one else who can come to my rescue, lift me ashore, redeem, resurrect and sustain me? No, not at all. Deign, therefore, to salve me, as I look upon Thee, as *my sole Refuge.*

Rivetted am I to Narayana by word, deed and thought

नमामि नारायण पादपङ्कजं
करोमि नारायण पूजनं सदा ।
वदामि नारायण नाम निर्मलं
स्मरामि नारायण तत्त्वमव्ययम् ॥ ३५ ॥

Namāmi Nārāyaṇa pādapaṅkajaṁ
Karomi Nārāyaṇa pūjanaṁ sadā
Vadāmi Nārāyaṇa nāma nirmalaṁ
Smarāmi Nārāyaṇa tattvamavyayaṁ

At Nārāyaṇa's lotus feet do I prostrate,
At all times do I Nārāyaṇa propitiate,

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Spell out do I 'Nārāyaṇa', the name immaculate
Nārāyaṇa, the primary entity, immutable, do I
contemplate

Sadā Nārāyaṇa pādapaṅkajaṁ namāmi, Nārāyaṇa pūjanaṁ karomi, nirmalaṁ Nārāyaṇa nāma vadāmi, avyayaḥ Nārāyaṇa tattvaṁ smarāmi.

Sadā—always,
Nārāyaṇa pādapaṅkajaṁ—at Nārāyaṇa's lotus feet,
namāmi—(I) prostrate,
Nārāyaṇa pūjanaṁ–propitiation (worship) of Nārāyaṇa,
karomi—(I) do,
nirmalaṁ—absolutely pure (in itself, it sanctifies the chanter as well),
Nārāyaṇa nāma vadāmi—(That) name, Nārāyaṇa, I utter (chant),
avyayaḥ—changeless (immutable), no waxing or waning,
Nārāyaṇa tattvaṁ—(that) fundamental entity, the truth (ultimate),
smarāmi—I contemplate (meditate upon).

The poet's prayer that his mind be lifted away from the sensual pleasures and worldly pursuits and be immersed, instead, in incessant contemplation of the Lord's lotus feet has been duly granted by Him. And so, the poet gives vent to his current experience, namely, being rivetted to Lord Nārāyaṇa by word, deed and thought, as a true 'upāsaka' (practicant) ought to be.

What a pity ! the worldlings can but do not utter the holy names of the Lord and court, instead, endless miseries

श्रीनाथ नारायण वासुदेव
श्रीकृष्ण भक्तप्रिय चक्रपाणे ।

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श्रीपद्मनाभाच्युत कैटभारे
श्रीराम पद्माक्ष हरे मुरारे ॥ ३६ ॥

अनन्त वैकुण्ठ मुकुन्द कृष्ण
गोविन्द दामोदर माधवेति ।
वक्तुं समर्थोऽपि न वक्ति कश्चित्
अहो जनानां व्यसनाभिमुख्यम् ॥ ३७ ॥

Śrīnātha ! Nārāyaṇa ! Vāsudeva !
Śrī Kṛṣṇa ! Bhaktapriya ! Cakrapāṇe !
Śrī Padmanābha ! Acyuta ! Kaiṭabhāre !
Śrī Rāma ! Padmākṣa ! Hare ! Murāre !
Ananta ! Vaikuṇṭha ! Mukunda ! Kṛṣṇa !
Govinda ! Dāmodara ! Mādhava ! iti
Vaktuṁ samarthopi na vakti kaścit
Aho janānāṁ vyasanābhimukhyaṁ !

To address the Supreme Lord lustily as Śrī Nātha !
Nārāyaṇa ! Vāsudeva ! Śrī Kṛṣṇa ! Bhaktapriya !
Cakrapāṇe ! Śrī Padmanābha ! Acyuta ! Kaiṭabhāre !
Śrī Rāma ! Padmākṣa ! Hare ! Murāre !
Ananta ! Vaikuṇṭha ! Mukunda ! Kṛṣṇa !
Govinda ! Dāmodara ! Mādhava ! and so on,
'Tis well within the competence of every one
But, alas ! none does, the folks court instead
endless pain.

(From the 6th line) Mādhava iti vaktuṁ samarthaḥ api kaścit na vakti janānāṁ vyasanābhimukhyaṁ aho !

Śrīnātha !—O, Consort of Śrī (Lakṣmi),
Nārāyaṇa ! — O, Lord Nārāyaṇa !, *Vāsudeva !* — O,
Kṛṣṇa, son of Vāsudeva,
Śrī Kṛṣṇa !—O, Lord Kṛṣṇa !

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Bhakta priya !—O, lover of the devout !

Cakrapāṇe !—O, wielder of the Discus !

Padmākṣa !—O, lotus eyed ! *Ananta !*—O, the Endless (Eternal) one !

Vaikuṇṭha !—O, Lord of the transcendental abode, Vaikuṇṭha !

Dāmodara !—O, Kṛṣṇa ! (Kṛṣṇa, the Divine lad got His tummy tethered by a rope, a punishment inflicted by the mother),

iti—so on, *vaktuṁ samarthaḥ api*—although competent to utter,

kaścit na vakti—no one utters,

janānāṁ vyasanābhimukhyam—the greed of the people to pursue the path of pain,

aho !—alas ! it is surprising.

The holy names of the Supreme Lord, spelling out His glory and grandeur and His auspicious traits, are there, any number of them. By just pronouncing any one of them one can attain salvation, during the present (Kali) yuga. The merciful Lord has also endowed every one with a tongue, happily located with all the operational ease which goes with such a location. Every one can thus easily pronounce the Lord's holy names and attain salvation. And yet, what a marvel ! People abstain from going through even such a simple vocal exercise and court, as if it is a pleasure trip, the path of pain and suffering. The poet naturally deplores the fate of the ungodly who are sense-buried and earth-bound to such an extent that they would not utter any of the holy names of the Lord, even once.

Moksha, the sure reward for steadfast devotion to Lord Vishnu

ध्यायन्ति ये विष्णुमनन्तमव्ययं
हृत्पद्ममध्ये सततं व्यवस्थितम् ।

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समाहितानां सततामयप्रदं
ते यान्ति सिद्धिं परमाञ्च वैष्णवीम् ॥ ३८ ॥

Dhyāyanti ye Viṣṇumanantamavyayaṁ
Hṛtpadma madhye satataṁ vyavasthitaṁ
Samāhitānāṁ satatābhayapradaṁ
Te yānti siddhiṁ paramañca Vaiṣṇavīm

Whosoever meditates on Lord Viṣṇu, the eternal,
The never-changing, Him that stays for ever,
Firm in heart's centre, ever ready to succour
The devout who do their senses control,
Attains Mokṣa, Viṣṇu's abode, supreme and eternal.

Ye anantaṁ avyayaṁ hṛtpadmamadhye satataṁ vyavasthitaṁ samāhitānām satatābhayapradaṁ Viṣṇuṁ dhyāyanti, te paramāṁ vaiṣṇavīṁ siddhiṁ yānti.

Ye—Whosoever, *anantaṁ*—endless, eternal,
avyayaṁ—The changeless never-changing, *hṛtpadma-madhye*—In the core of the lotus-shaped heart,
satataṁ—always, for ever, *vyavasthitaṁ*—firmly lodged
samahitanāṁ satatābhayapradaṁ–ever vouchsafing succour to those who keep their senses, well under control,
Viṣṇum dhyāyanti–meditate on Viṣṇu, the Omni-present All-pervading,
te—he, *paramāṁ*—the highest, the best one can aspire for,
vaisṇavīṁ—the abode of Viṣṇu, whose sole prerogative it is to grant one entry into it,
siddhim—Mokṣa, *yānti*—attains.

Well, the poet has, time and again, exhorted the worldly men around, to give up attachment to earthly relations and sensual pleasures and commune with God, establishing rapport with Him by means of constant meditation on His lotus feet.

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But then, the worldly men might ask where God is, how He can be got at and what benefits He can confer. Here is the answer—He is right inside the core of everyone's heart, all the time. There is no gift beyond His capacity and in fact, the best of all His bounty, the greatest (highest) of all His gifts, is the grant of Mokṣa, the final emancipation (release) from the dreadful cycle of birth, death and rebirth and entry into the high heaven, His transcendental abode whence there is no returning, the Eternal Land. All that one has to do is to meditate on Him, who stays firm in everyone's heart, with steadfast devotion, keeping the unruly senses, well under control.

Salutation to Madhava, relaxing in the Milk-ocean, amidst glorious setting

क्षीरसागर तरङ्गशीकरा-
सारतारकित चारुमूर्त्तये ।
भोगिभोग शयनीयशायिने
माधवाय मधुविद्विषे नमः ॥ ३९ ॥

Kṣīrasāgara taraṅgaśīkarā
Sāratārakita cārumūrtaye
Bhogibhoga śayanīyaśāyine
Mādhavāya Madhuvidviṣe namaḥ

Salutation to Mādhava, Who the demon Madhu slew,
Now relaxing on the bosom of Ādiśeṣa, the serpent,
In the 'Milk-ocean' whose wavy sprays spill around,
Setting on His body exquisite like stars in the blue.

Kṣīrasāgara taraṅga śīkarā sāratārakita cāru mūrtaye bhogi bhoga śayanīya śāyine Mādhavāya Madhuvidviṣe namaḥ

Kṣirasāgara taraṅga śīkarā sāratārakita cārumūrtaye — O He, of an exquisite body where the sprays thrown by the waves of the Milk-ocean look like stars in their multitude

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bhogi bhoga śāyanīya śāyine—(who is) relaxing on the cushiony bosom of Ādiśeśa, the serpent
Madhuvidviṣe—(and), who slew Madhu, the demon
Mādhavāya—unto Him, Lakṣmi's consort, *namaḥ*—(I offer my), salutation.

What a glorious setting, envisioned by the mind's eye of the poet, revelling in the realm of God-love! The worldlings whom the poet had been addressing, every now and then, could also take heart and enjoy the beatific vision of the Lord if they followed in the foot-steps of the poet. The milky sprays, thrown up by the billows of the 'Milk-ocean' where Lord Viṣṇu, in His 'Vyūha' aspect, is relaxing on the cushiony bosom of Adiśeṣa, the serpent-couch, soft and soporific, settle on the Lord's charming person, of bluish hue and look like the sparkling stars in a clear, blue sky. The reader too can enjoy the glorious setting, projected by the poet, by imbibing the spirit underlying these scintillating ślokas, suffused with Kṛṣna bhakti of a very high order. As a matter of fact, our elders have set the pace, in this direction, by reciting this śloka, in blissful contemplation of Mādhava, while going to bed, at night, and enjoining upon us all, belonging to posterity, to do likewise.

The author's subscription

यस्य प्रियौ श्रुतिधरौ कविलोकवीरौ
मित्रौ द्विजन्मवरपद्म शरावभूताम् ।
तेनाम्बुजाक्ष चरणाम्बुज षट्पदेन
राज्ञा कृता कृतिरियं कुलशेखरेण ॥ ४० ॥

Yasya priyau sṛtidharau kavilokavīrau
Mitrau dvijanmavarapadma śarāvabhūtām
Tenāmbujākṣa caraṇāmbuja ṣaṭpadena
Rājñā kṛtā kṛtiriyaṁ Kulaśekhareṇa

This hymnal was by King Kulaśekhara composed,
Who is but the honey-bee in the lotus feet poised,

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Of Mukund, the lotus-eyed, with two brahmin
friends blessed
In dear Padma and Śara, eminent poets, in Vedas
well versed

Yasya priyau mitrau śṛtidharau kavilokavīrau dvijanmavara Padmaśarau abhūtām ambujākṣa caranāmbuja ṣatpadena tena Kulaśekhareṇa rājñā iyaṁ kṛtiḥ kṛtā

Yasya—for whom, *priyau*—dear ones, *mitrau*—two friends,

śṛtidharau—well-versed in the Vedas,

kavilokavīrau—(and) poets of great eminence (right on top),

dvijanmavara Padma Śarau—brahmins (twice born), by name Padma and Śara,

abhūtāṁ—there were

ambujākṣa caraṇāmbuja ṣaṭpadena—(and who is like) the six-footed honey-bee in the lotus feet of the lotus-eyed (Mukunda),

tena kulaśekhareṇa—by that Kulaśekhara, *rājñā*—king, *iyaṁ*—this, *kṛtiḥ*—hymnal (composition), *kritā*—was authored (composed).

Even as one concludes a letter by subscribing one's name, that is, writing (signing) it at the foot of the letter, it is customary for the poet to reveal his name and antecedence in the end-song (stanza). And so, here the author reveals his name as Kulaśekhara, with two intimate brahmin friends, named, *Padma* and *Śara*, well-versed in Vedas and also right in the vanguard of poets, by virtue of their poetic excellence. This, by itself, is not enough to identify the author with Kulaśekhara Ālvār whose date of birth according to the traditional account was in the 28th year of Kaliyuga (month of *Māsi*, Star—*Punarvasu*), that is, more than 5,000 years ago. The modern researchers who go by internal evidence and historic perspective have, however, put down the dates of the Ālvārs, as a whole,

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between the 5th and 8th century A.D. This is, however, not the place for a discussion on the age of the Ālvārs, a subject, which has been tackled threadbare in my book, 'On fixing the age of the Ālvārs' published nearly twenty years ago. The popular belief, the majority view is that this hymnal was also composed by King Kulaśekhara of the good olden days, canonised as an 'Ālvār Saint', the author of the Tamil hymnal 'Perumāḷ Tirumoli' (105 stanzas), included in the compendium, collectively known as 'Divya Prabhandham', comprising, in all, four thousand stanzas. The other school of thought, of course in a minority, holds that this hymnal has been composed by a king, named Kulaśekhara, perhaps a remote descendant of the ancient king Kulaśekhara, steeped in 'Kṛṣṇa bhakti'. The latter school might argue that the 'Guruparampara' which gives the traditional account of the lives of the 'Ālvārs' and the Pūrvācāryas' (ancient preceptors) does not contain any mention of the two brahmin friends of great eminence, Padma and Śara, highlighted in this concluding śloka by the author. If these two friends merited mention in the end śloka which tells us no more about the author himself than the bare mention of his name and his kingship (without even the details of the territory ruled over by him), it is reasonable to expect a similar mention in the 'Guruparampara', as well. Moreover, Kulaśekhara Ālvār was known to be an ardent devotee of Lord Râma whereas the present hymnal reveals the author's devotion, *par excellence*, to Lord Krishna. No doubt, in the final analysis, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa were but the incarnations of the Supreme Lord Nārāyana. As a matter of fact, two of the ten decades of Saint Kulaśekhara's 'Perumāḷ Tirumoli' (6th and 7th) deal exclusively with the Ālvār's 'Kṛṣṇānubhava' ecstatic contemplation of Kṛṣṇa's boyhood pranks.

Well, be it the one way or the other, the intrinsic merit of this hymnal commends itself to the chanters of these soul-stirring ślokas, drenched in devotion, a saturation of a very high order, and thus makes it an integral portion of our stotra literature, so very vital to our spiritual advancement.

The poet sums up, in this concluding śloka, his devotion to Mukunda by comparing it with the rapport between the lotus

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and the honey-bee because the Lord is lotus-eyed and His lotus feet shed honey in profusion, attracting the poet, the figurative honey-bee. '*Viṣṇoḥ pade parame madhvautsaḥ*' *(Viṣṇu Sūktam)*.

Thus ends 'Mukunda Mālā'

'Kṛṣṇāya Vāsudevāya Devakī Nandanāya ca
Nandagopa Kumārāya Govindāya namo namaḥ'

'Salutation to Lord Kṛṣṇa, son of Vāsudeva, darling of Devakī, the foster-son of Nandagopa, crowned as Govinda'.

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ERRATA

Page	*Line*	*For*	*Read*
1	2	श्रीकृष्ण	श्रीकृष्णाय
,,	3	MUKUNDAMALA	MUKUNDAMĀLĀ
,,	9	insert 'the' after 'township'	
9	17	into	unto
10	21	ror	for
16	9	parikhnnaḥ	parikhinnaḥ
,,	13	studed	studded
,,	2 (from bottom)	paśhyanti	paśyanti
19	14	;	,
20	12	self	self-effort
,,	15	Visnupota	Viṣṇupotaḥ
23	1	his	His
24	6 (from bottom)	insert , before 'side'	
25	3 ,,	bhavatāḥ	bhavataḥ
26	12	these	those
27	17	insert , before 'highly'	
28	28	,, ,,	'my'
29	7	,, ,,	,,
31	16	Krsna	Kṛṣṇa
33	23	Srikrsna	Śrīkṛṣṇā
,,	,,	namamrta	nāmāmṛta
35	21	delete '2. preceded by'	
,,	,,	insert after 1, preceded by 2,	
36	25	Srikrsna	Śrīkṛṣṇa
38	14	insert , after 'is'	
39	4	Ksudrā	Kṣudrā
,,	5	Dṛṣte	Dṛṣṭe

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Page	*Line*	*For*	*Read*
39	7	dumdles	dwindles
,,	8	delete, after	'mighty'
41	16	diviyamrta	divyāmṛta
42	15	Gopis	Gopīs
43	23	insert , after 'me'	
44	7	be fall	befall
,,	10	Gopi's	Gopīs'
45	14	nearly	nearby
46	28	at	all-
47	10	प्रापुर्वाच्छतं	प्रापुर्वाच्छनं
,,	6 (from bottom)	vākpravṛtta	vākpravṛttā
,,	4 ,,	Nārāyaṇakhyaṁ	Nārāyaṇākhyaṁ
,,	3 ,,	'Śri,	'Śrī',
48	7	incarnation	incarceration
,,	14	insert , after 'answer'	
53	20	delete , at the end	
,,	24	facilities	felicities
54	3	Kṛśanunā	Kṛśānunā
55	19	impending	impeding
56	17	bond	band
57	3	Kaleidscopic	Kaleidoscopic
,,	23	solve	salve
64	16	insert , after	'changeless'
,,	19	Samahitanām	Samāhitānām

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(14) ŚRI UPĀDHI KHANDANA
(15) ŚRI PRAPAÑCAMITHYĀTVĀDI KHANDANA
(16) ŚRI TATVODYOTA
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(27) ŚRIMAD BHĀGAVATAM

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